

# THE STUDENT WORLD

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Christianity and other Faiths

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# THE STUDENT WORLD

Serial Number 108

## Christianity and others Faiths

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# THE STUDENT WORLD

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Dr. W. A. VISSER 't HOOFT *Editor*

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## EDITORIAL

### Christians and other Pagans

A few years ago it was generally thought that the problem of the Christian attitude to other faiths would gradually solve itself. Thus the Jerusalem Missionary Conference in 1928 came to the conclusion, that "the chief rival and enemy of Christianity in our time is not any non-Christian religion but an irreligious secularism". At that same conference some went so far as to declare that "for all practical purposes Christianity must ignore the incapacitated older religions".

Today we are somewhat less inclined to dismiss the issue of the relations between the Christian and other faiths so easily. It happens that many of the tendencies which seemed at first secular, have since taken on the features of a full-fledged religion. Professor van der Leeuw in his article in this number reminds us of the strange recrudescence of paganism in the western world and rebukes us rightly for our superficial notion of heathenism as if it were nothing but intellectual backwardness. Again the religions which we declared so glibly to be dying are still with us. "Les gens que vous plaignez se portent assez bien". It is true that they are being transformed but that does not make them any more ready to disappear. In fact, as



*Dr. Macnicol shows us, they are quite successful in breaking the impetus of the Christian attack by adopting just enough Christian truth to take the wind off the sails of the missionary movement. And this type of syncretism (however indefinite it may be, syncretism remains a "religion"! ) is not merely confined to the East. Mr. Paton explains in his contribution that the tolerant indifference and the Irish stew religiosity which are such dominant features of western culture today belong to the same family.*

*Thus the question of Christianity's attitude to other faiths is at least as acute as the one of its attitude to irreligion. One might even ask whether, in view of the fact that man is such an incurably religious being, every secularism does not inevitably lead to some new idol-worship and whether therefore we should not take the positions of old or new faiths more seriously than the mere negations of secularism. However this may be, we are again deeply aware that Christianity is confronted with a situation in which its very existence is at stake. How shall we meet that situation? What shall our attitude be to the old faiths of the East and to the new faiths of the West?*

*Our first inclination is to say: We will defend our heritage; we will proclaim our convictions; we will evangelise the world with our message! But if we speak thus, we are not yet aware of the real crisis of Christianity. Do we not know that it is precisely because Christianity has been so often presented as our affair that we witness today this universal revolt against it? Our Indian contributor, D.T. Niles, has important things to say on this subject. And do we not know that the very weakness of the Christian cause consists precisely in the pernicious confusion between the revelation of God and our private opinions? Whatever else we may think of Karl Barth, we can all be grateful to him for his insistence on this point which constitutes the burden of his lecture on "The Christian as Witness".*

*No, our job is not to meet other religions with our religion but to serve as faithful transmitters of God's message to men, to all men, including ourselves. In other words, there is no place for any sort of superiority-complex, either of the Pharisaic or of the western-imperialist variety. Before God we are all*

*pagans because we have all sinned against the First Commandment.*

*Thus witnessing cannot mean that we put ourselves over against our fellow-men. On the contrary, we can only take our stand among them, next to them and speak as from one poor beggar to another. Dr. L.P. Larsen's answer to the difficult question of "Co-operation between different faiths" is based on this attitude. While there can be no question of compromising that which God has given us (precisely because it comes from Him!), we may never look upon our faith as a distinction conferred upon us which separates us from others. The better we understand God's gift, the nearer we will be drawn to our fellow-men. For Christ has come to save syncretistic and secular as well as Christian pagans.*

V. 't H.



## The Reality of Heathenism

G. van der LEEUW

Our times are difficult and confused. But they offer one advantage to those who are not *laudatores temporis acti* but would understand the living forces of their own age. When for a moment — it is not so very easy! — they succeed in taking an unbiassed and unperplexed attitude towards the various happenings in the post-war world, they will see that all sorts of ideas which long since had been declared vanquished by a victorious nineteenth century, notions that had been stored in the museum of history by modern science and philosophy, are not dead at all but very much alive. Things that had been put aside as “primitive”, “medieval”, “scholastic”, reappear as real forces. This reappearance may sometimes be a reason for rejoicing, at other times for lamenting, but it must always be an incentive to *recueillement* and humility. Man is not a traveller by aircraft, looking down on Italy today, on Persia or India to-morrow; he must be compared to one who is walking in the Alps: he thinks that he has covered quite a distance and has reached new surroundings only to discover at the horizon or even quite near the same enormous mountain that he meant to leave behind in the morning: *There is no past!* That is the lesson we all must learn and can learn in these our times. It holds true for the revolutionary seeking something new and finding something very old as well as for the conservative defending the old times and even thereby propagating new thought. Times in which the medieval corporative commonwealth is a new ideal and the “modern” revolutionary movement of the proletariat is being regarded as old-fashioned, are very apt to impress upon our minds that home-truth, that there is really no past, dead and buried, and that the great ideas of mankind, though sometimes temporarily concealed, live and flourish for ever.

Among those many living things is heathenism. Daily papers in many countries are full of it. Not so very long ago Christian and non-Christian people agreed in considering heathenism an error and a fable. It was known, of course, that there are still many heathens. But they lived far away and Christian missions and modern civilisation rivalled in putting a speedy end to their heathen creeds. In the opinion of civilised people heathenism was a thing dead and done with, a thing to read about in books of learning and fiction, but wholly indifferent to every-day life. It seemed hard to understand that the Greeks, to all appearances so advanced on the way of progress, could have cherished such barbarous and childish beliefs in non-existing deities. But it seemed a justifiable hypothesis that on the rise of Greek civilisation, Greek religion was already dead or nearly dead. For it seemed impossible that men of refined culture and enlightened learning, like the old Greeks, could really have believed that there are gods. Such a belief could be held only by primitive people, in the childhood of humanity, just as in our times only children can be convinced of the existence of Santa Claus or Father Christmas. And was not the great moral and intellectual advance realised by Christianity, that great progress from polytheism to monotheism about which the manuals of religious history were so eloquent and which put an end to the beautiful but rather poetical and at all events unreal world of the Greek gods ?

Not only agnostics but also Christians thought and spoke about heathenism in the same sense. And this was no proof of a strong Christian consciousness. In the opinion of a large body of Christians in all civilised parts of the world, the decline and fall of heathenism were not the result of a competition of real forces, but of a victory of intellectual enlightenment on error and stupidity. One could read in the Bible with what scorn the prophets spoke about the powerless idols made of wood and stone and one could smile indulgently on seeing the heathens so simple-minded. But it was forgotten that the Bible itself does not seek the powerlessness of the idols in an error of the human mind, but in the power of God, the only Mighty One.



The First Commandment : " Thou shalt have no other gods before Me ", was regarded as a claim that could be easily fulfilled and almost as a truism. And it was forgotten that the modern world of non-heathen, and at the same time non-Christian thought made use of the same arguments in proclaiming the futility of every belief in gods or in God. Positivism declared all religious worship to be a phenomenon of the infancy of humanity, to disappear at a comparatively early date ; it admitted that monotheism is a result of progress as compared to polytheism and fetishism, but it insisted that it must be regarded at the same time as a first step in the direction of a scientific monism to be reached in a future that will have no use either for gods or for the Lord Jehovah. Against this thesis and others of the same kind Christianity could not be supposed to have much to say as long as it adhered to the theory of the error in heathenism. And thus positivism could propagate and divulgate without meeting with vigorous protest, the probability that in a near future the belief in the one and only Santa Claus should be proved but little less childish than the various beliefs in bogeys, devils and good fairies to be found in heathenism.

The error seems now to be on the other side. For it is an error to suppose that there existed never and nowhere any gods, but in the imagination of pagan people. And neither Israelite nor Christian Antiquity have fallen into this error. To the Jew of the Old Testament the heathen gods are very much real. Compared to the all-powerful Jahve they are indeed as nothing. Jahve vanquishes them and his worshipper defies and abuses them. But even in their defeat their reality appears. The early Fathers held the same conviction. They did not question for one moment the existence of pagan gods or their comparative power. But they also did not doubt that they are demons, devils, who have been virtually defeated by Christ. Venus is banished to a mountain-recess and regarded as a most beautiful she-devil, but she does not lose her very real power.

Of course, it is possible to see this biblical realism also as a token of *sancta simplicitas*. But it is better to appreciate it as a consequence of a very sober sense of reality. Last



year there was published in Germany a book on the religion of the ancient Greeks<sup>1</sup>. The author is nearly the first of his guild in upholding the reality of Greek gods; far from being the products of poetical imagination, the *dramatis personae* of a child-like dream, they are the forms (*Gestalten*) of a true and real encounter between man and a power. The god stands before man, who falls on his face and worships him. Is it not, after all, rather curious that among the many learned and artistic people who have written about Greek religion so very few have seen that Greek gods were real powers and their worship a real act? Our only excuse seems to be that we were so prejudiced by the delusion of our modern Enlightenment that we could still admit religious imagination and perhaps religious experience but never religious realities.

Today the great structures of Positivism and Enlightenment are collapsing everywhere. It appears that we are surrounded by real powers, we meet with them at every step: the power of blood and the power of death and the power of sex and the power of hunger, the power of the spoken word and the power of history and the power of the strong man and the power of power. A tremendous psychologist like Freud and a tremendous thinker like Nietzsche, a tremendous poet like Stefan George and a tremendous ruler like Mussolini, they all agree upon the reality of powers. And also the less tremendous, a Klages and a Lawrence, and the violent if not tremendous gods of the "Third Empire" (Dritte Reich) are of the same opinion. That the earth which has given us birth is a power we are told by Klages in terms of a sensuous and, by the Minister of Agriculture Darré, in terms of a childish romanticism. That death is a power Freud has told us in a really impressive way, in the face of a world-wide hygienic optimism. We ought not to be astonished too much that there are no new names ready for the old gods, and we ought not to be too hard on the new paganism of the German Third Confession for seeking the real powers where they certainly are not: in the well-nigh

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<sup>1</sup> W. F. Otto, *Dionysos*, 1933.

unknown religious past of the Teuton race. The new heathenism has still a great deal to learn. But it is there and its gods are there. They were never dead, only mankind has been deaf and blind.

But also we Christians have a great deal to learn. First and foremost we have to learn that Christianity is in no way compatible with any form of Enlightenment or belief in progress. We must learn to confess, side by side with the pagans, that we are surrounded by powers, dark powers and shining powers ; that we are surrounded by a living reality, not by a self-constructed system ; that this living reality intervenes into our life with very strong hands, that it is like an Indian polybracchic deity, like a Greek ambiguous demon.

The most important thing we Christians have to learn, however, is that the essential feature in Christendom is not an accurate or an erroneous conception of deity, but only one very practical thing : obedience to the God of our life. We will not deny the existence of pagan gods ; on the contrary, we too encounter them daily. But we know the Commandment : "Thou shalt have no other gods but Me", or in other and yet essentially the same terms : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind". These hard but realistic times preach with great force the Commandment : "Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them". If there were no gods, the commandment would be superfluous. But God knows they are there and why they are there.

The reality of heathenism gives Christianity a task, new in appearance, but very old in reality. The great fight of Christianity in this world will no longer be directed against agnosticism and negation of faith. It will be directed against heathenism, that is to say against real religious forces. They are being born and growing among us every day. The formidable reality of eastern religions approaches us so near that in a very short time it will be no more possible for Christian missions to bow down towards heathenism from the dazzling heights of Christian civilisation — as they have done sometimes in the past. They will have to wage a bloody



war, a fight for life, a desperate self-defence, as they have done when Christianity was young and heathenism looked down upon it from the dazzling heights of pagan civilisation. The world has been Christian in appearance for centuries. Now it comes to light that the world is really pagan to a high degree, even among Christians. But it can only be an advantage for the Church of Christ that the necessity of reversion to its true vocation of obedience to the Lord of the Church will be more apparent every day. For it is certainly better to wage war against a living heathenism than against the barren negation of an atrophied, so-called modern age of rationalist and technical Enlightenment. The conflict in the German Church is already proof that the growth of heathenism means the spiritual growth of the Church.

When in and after the war the forces of Rationalism and Enlightenment seemed to wane, we have perhaps thought that the victory of Christianity was near and the world would shortly be Christian again, as it was in old times. Such a victory would perhaps have been a conquest of Christian civilisation, but it could never have been a triumph of the Holy Spirit. Such a triumph is only realised in strife and warfare, in peril and martyrdom. We are witnessing the birth of a new world, the birth of a new Church. But the proud word of Goethe after the battle of Valmy : " From now on a new period of world history commences, and you can say that you have witnessed it ", can only then be made our own when we open wide our eyes and lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees. For only when we bend our knees can we appropriate that greater word : " You shall be witnesses unto Me. "

## Beyond Syncretism and Europeanism

NICOL MACNICOL

Perhaps the most useful way in which to deal briefly with the difficult subject of the extent to which, in the relation of Christianity with other systems, syncretism is permissible, is to observe how the problem was solved when such a conflict arose in another age, and to pass on, with that experience to guide us, to survey some aspects of what is happening today. We shall accordingly begin by considering what happened when Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism, systems in some respects akin to Hinduism and Buddhism, came face to face with Christianity.

Why was it that Christianity in the main rejected Gnosticism ? The reasons that convinced the Church that it must refuse to pay the price that Gnosticism demanded may guide us in our search for the limits of syncretism. Professor H. M. Gwatkin has summed up the choice that the Church had to make and that it, with whatever hesitations, made in the end decisively. "The contest", he says, "was vital. Gnosticism undermined Christian monotheism by its distinction of the Creator from the Supreme, Christian morals by its opposition of the philosopher to the unlearned, Christian practice by its separation of knowledge from action ; and it cut away the very basis of the Gospel whenever it explained away its history. In every case it had got hold of truth on one side — the reality of evil in the world, the function of knowledge in religion, the difference between the letter and the spirit ; but fragments of truth are not enough for a Gospel which is false if all truth is not summed up in Christ. Therefore there could be no peace between the Gnostic '*illuminati*' and the Christian Churches".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Early Church History, II. 68 f.



To deny the reality of the temporal and the centrality to religion of the moral struggle is to sever the arteries by which the very life-blood of Christianity flows and whatever system, whether in the second century or the twentieth, maintains a position that has such consequences puts itself at once outside of all parley with that religion. Here Christianity must always be wholly uncompromising. By its attitude to Gnosticism it proved itself to be, as by its attitude to faiths that bear similar fruits today it must still prove itself, no syncretistic system. It yielded indeed in some directions to the temptation "to conciliate the natural man, but it had more in it", to quote Professor Moffat, "than an indiscriminate selection or an anxious imitation, such as syncretism usually exhibited"<sup>1</sup>. It had in it a vital force which enabled it to master and assimilate to itself many elements that came from without, but what was hostile in essence to its central spirit and was directed towards contradictory ends it resisted instinctively. Between it and Gnosticism, therefore, there could be no alliance.

Similarly Christianity, while deeply influenced both for good and for evil by Neo-Platonism, refused to come to terms of accommodation with it also and for similar reasons. St. Augustine, whom Neo-Platonism deeply and permanently influenced, has described in a famous passage the intractable discord of which he was aware between the view of God and the world that he abandoned when he became a Christian and that which replaced it. He did not find in the one the revelation of the Word made flesh, the coming together of the divine and the human with all the consequences of inward moral cleansing and of unquenchable hope that that conveyed; he found these things at the centre of the other<sup>2</sup>. In the battle between Christianity and the rival claimants of that day for dominion over the soul of man the Cross was "horos", we are told, the boundary line separating Christianity decisively from all such doctrines as those of the Gnostics and the Neo-Platonists, and it is so still, because it was planted, with all the significance it bears, in a world of reality,

<sup>1</sup> E.R.E. VI. p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Confessions*, VII. p. 19.

and testified to and symbolised a moral conflict and a moral victory. The truth of the Incarnation "does not seem", according to Dr. Inge, "to be incompatible with the ground-principles of Neo-Platonism"<sup>1</sup>. On the contrary the acceptance of that truth involves surely the complete transformation of its conception of God and of man's relation to God.

What is significant here, as defining the limits within which syncretism is inadmissible within Christianity, is the insight which discerned those central things that bear within them the truth and the power of the religion and which therefore refused to make any terms or admit any compromise. As regards this vital core of its message Christianity is quite intransigent. It says, "Stand then on that side, for on this am I". The two ways between which choice has to be made are, on the one hand, that of "seeking the eternal by a higher possession of the evanescent"<sup>2</sup>, — which is the Christian way — and, on the other, that of seeking it by escape from the evanescent, by the way, that is of negation, which leads to apathy and moral stagnation. St. Augustine had his mystical hours — as at Ostia with his mother Monica — when it seemed to him that they reached together in ecstasy the realm of "the Wisdom, by whom all things are made", "in Whom 'to have been' and 'to be hereafter' are not, but only 'to be' for she is eternal". That is not the way by which Christ leads His children into the joy of their Lord. It is not the way that Augustine in another hour of illumination was aware of when he heard Him Whose word is, "Come unto Me all ye that labour". Instead of the "impassable roads" of which he was aware leading through the bleak timeless regions of Neo-Platonic ecstasy, it is now possible for him "to keep on the way to the country of peace, guarded by the Court of the heavenly King"<sup>3</sup>. While it is true that Augustine sometimes — under the influence of his conviction of an overwhelmingly transcendent God — seems to forget the Father and "strikes a chill as contact might with a being

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<sup>1</sup> E.R.E. IX, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 404.

<sup>3</sup> *Confessions*, VII., 21.



from another planet ”<sup>1</sup>, and while lesser teachers than he have erred in one direction or another through the centuries, leading the Church into the errors that a syncretistic accommodation or a one-sided emphasis upon a partial truth may produce, yet in the main the course that Christianity has followed in the midst of the other religions has been by the road — straight as a rule can make it — that leads through the incarnation of the eternal Son towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God. “By this sign”, says Harnack, “it conquered; for on all human things, on what was eternal and on what was transient alike, Christianity had set the Cross ”.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the contrast that we find demarcating so rigorously the bounds of Christianity in distinction from its early rivals, and excluding any attempt at syncretism within them is confirmed still further when we consider the prevailing religious tendencies that divide the world at the present time into two hostile camps between which a choice has to be made. An alert and objective observer of religious movements concludes his survey of the religions with a diagnosis of the modern situation as he sees it. On the one hand are those who in one sense or another can call themselves Christians, “on the other hand there seems”, he says, “to be an increasing number of persons who have been led by natural and acquired sympathy to adopt in some form one of the Eastern religions ”<sup>3</sup>. Archbishop Söderblom has drawn a similar line of distinction between the religious influences that he notes as widely dominant over men’s minds at the present time. “On one side timeless mysticism; on the other the historical, the very fact the saving fact ”.<sup>4</sup> The decay of the Roman Empire has been described as the West expiring in the embrace of the East. That would seem, in the opinion of some observers, to be a danger that is threatening the West today also. It is not, however, in reality a conflict between points of the compass but between

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<sup>1</sup> Edwyn Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Expansion of Christianity*, II., p. 468.

<sup>3</sup> E. E. Kellett, *A Short Study of Religions*, p. 567.

<sup>4</sup> *The Living God*, p. 348.

two markedly different and wholly irreconcilable views, divided from each other by a cleft which reaches to the furthest depths of our being. Whether these views can meet and blend in any syncretism or whether such a peaceful solution of this spiritual conflict is beyond attainment may perhaps be tested in the circumstances of today by attempts that have recently been made by leaders of Indian religious thought to build a bridge between these two sharply opposed solutions of the riddle of the universe.

India, we know, has evolved a philosophy which is the most fully elaborated form of "timeless mysticism" that has anywhere obtained control over men's lives. Much of it is built upon foundations of human thought that have crumbled with the ages. The old doctrine is accordingly today little more than a majestic ruin. Yet certain of its main principles remain and can be reconstructed into a system that appears reasonable, that wins respect, and that is in agreement with tendencies that are widely prevalent in the thought of the modern world. They may indeed be reconstructed into a philosophico-religious system such as may attract men of all lands, a system reaching forth beyond responsibility, beyond freedom and beyond God. What may emerge if these efforts prove successful, is something that can be described in the words of one of the western evangelists of a closely similar doctrine as "religious wisdom transposed into the key of a pure and complete naturalism<sup>1</sup>".

There are outstanding personalities in India at the present time who are seeking to find their way towards such a syncretism. They would create a new Hinduism which shall still be the inheritor of the ancient Hindu tradition but shall share with Christianity some of the spiritual fruits which it is more naturally fitted to bring forth. Thus both Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and Sir S. Radhakrishnan, the most outstanding representatives of the demand for the re-making of the old tradition, desire to graft a more vigorous activity in behalf of good upon that gnarled stem, re-interpreting *Advaita*, for example, as "the love, the oneness with All and

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<sup>1</sup> Middleton Murray, *God*.



with God ”.<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Radhakrishnan is certainly striking a new and a greatly needed note in Hinduism when he issues this summons : “ Let us become soldiers on the march, soldiers of truth, soldiers fighting with love as our weapons, overturning the universe until the reign of God is established on earth.”<sup>2</sup>

It may be doubted, however, whether these brave efforts will find a response within Hinduism so long as these eclectics halt halfway in their reconstruction of their people's faith. It is obvious that they reject the traditional doctrine of *maya* ; a world of unreality can never be a world worth fighting for. But while *maya* is no longer understood by them as illusion but only as “ mystery ”, the Absolute or Brahman (which ever name he may bear) remains as completely out of relation with the world as he was before. It would appear, accordingly, as if the moral struggle was either, as before, an unreality, or, at least, a struggle foredoomed to defeat. There seems also to be still no reason why the Absolute should create and there seems no bond possible between him and created things or beings. So Sir S. Radhakrishnan, in the manner of the early system-makers of his land, has to have recourse to two Beings — a higher and a lower — one who is the Absolute and the other who is God, a human creation, “ the Absolute from the human end ”.<sup>3</sup> This is a method of solving the problem of the relation of the world and God that the West, too, has sometimes made trial of. It ends finally in the re-submergence of all phenomenal existence, “ God ” included, in *maya*, and the re-emergence of the sole-existent and quality-less Brahman. “ As an essentially human phenomenon ”, says Sir S. Radhakrishnan, “ religion insists on the ‘ otherness ’ of God ”<sup>4</sup>. Religion can hardly retain its reality and its power over the souls of men if it is “ essentially human ” and so, it is evident, essentially illusion.

The insoluble conflict between two types of principle reappears here once more. With the return of *maya* the

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Letters to a Friend*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *East and West in Religion*, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 344.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 340.

hollowness of the whole process is revealed and the course that must commend itself to those who are caught in this tangle of unreality will continue to be, as it has been in the past, that not, in spite of Sir S. Radhakrishnan's brave summons, of soldiers fighting for the reign of God on earth, but of fugitives from life itself. Once more we perceive that, just as the great truth of the Word made flesh which Christianity proclaims can be incorporated in Neo-Platonism only if Neo-Platonism can be reconstituted, God and the Absolute being made one and time and history accepted as real, — so also is it in the case of Hinduism as over against Christianity. These represent two contradictories that cannot be reconciled. Which of the two is dealing with ultimate Reality, — Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane saying "Abba, Father", or the Hindu ascetic of whom it is told that in the "Mutiny" days he turned his dying eyes upon the British soldier who had bayoneted him saying, "And thou, too, art He?" Is the ultimate unity a unity of filial love and obedience or a unity of absorption? There is no reconciliation possible between these two conceptions of life and its meaning and end.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan is to be honoured for his serious and resolute attempt to act as liaison officer — as Mr. Joad calls him — between East and West, bringing together what he accounts best in each. But so long as he rejects what is the keystone of the Christian arch, his bridge will not bear mankind to any realm of eternal values. Our choice has still to be between an account of the universe which is aware, as Jesus was, of a gracious and transcendent Will behind it and above it, to Whom He could say, "Father", and that which knows only, without as within, an "Urging Immanence", a moving tide upon which the human soul floats, calm indeed, but inert. The good and the evil effects upon character of the latter, which is the Hindu outlook upon life, may be indicated as serenity on the one hand and indifference on the other; or again as patience and the capacity for endurance on the one hand and feebleness of effort and moral inertia on the other. The serenity and patience that are the finest fruits of Hinduism are, indeed, beautiful and gracious qualities.



At the same time there are, we perceive, two kinds of serenity, one that of a strong, steadfast dependence upon a divine will of love and holiness, the other that which proceeds from an indifference to all things because they are meaningless and unreal and therefore undeserving of our concern. There are two kinds of patience, one that of faith in the overcoming power of goodness and of God, the patience in which, as Christ says, we win our souls; the other the patience that looks round wearily but with a forced resignation, upon a world that has no moral purpose and no moral end. The first of these two alternatives is that which the Christian seeks, the second is that of the Hindu. Between the two and dividing them from each other lies a whole moral universe.

Thus we stand with Christianity in a region that is above syncretism, a region of immovable things which, being correspondent with reality, cannot be adjusted or compromised. Hinduism at the same time, and Buddhism — as well as every genuine human disciple — have contributions which they may make to the context of Christianity, to the envelope of human experience into which the Christian revelation enters and which it does not in so doing destroy but irradiate. What in the second century was being sought through the conflict with Gnosticism was, as Professor Burkitt points out, the transference of the Gospel from a Semitic environment, “into the cultivated, scientific, philosophical civilization of the Græco-Roman world”.<sup>1</sup> The same task has to be again and again undertaken as Christianity enters into new environments. Thus at the present time as it makes for itself a place in India or in China, it has to exchange many of the temporary and local fashions of Europeanism for those of Asia which make it more intelligible there and acclimatise it to its surroundings. The treasure is one and inviolable, but the earthen vessel that contains it may have the shape and the colour of its time and context and may well by such means offer its own contribution of beauty and seriousness to that which it bears within it. But the transcending power belongs to God.

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<sup>1</sup> *Church and Gnosis*, p. VIII.

What the "desirable things" are that each nation and each religion brings with it from its inheritance cannot be estimated by a stranger. This however can be laid down without challenge as the test to be applied — Can Christ have his place among them? We can make use of this Ithuriel spear to distinguish what in the heritage of a people is precious and worthy to endure. In India, for example, there may be, and indeed must be, some lesson of value to be learned from the social structure of the caste system. That, as it is today, it is at variance with the whole spirit of Christ and His message is clear, and yet it has its elements of preciousness — as Sir S. Radhakrishnan would maintain — and these should not be lost. In Buddhism Baron von Hügel sees one great negative good which it proclaims with power. From being, he says, "penetrated with a sense of mere change and hence of pure desolation" it proclaims to the world the sense of the abiding so deeply implanted in man and so "is quite magnificent as a prolegomenon to all religion". Such a prolegomenon all natural religions, in so far as they represent a real striving, must furnish in some respect to the divine revelation which comes forth to meet them. A French Jesuit missionary, Father Johanns, has sought to demonstrate how "if we eliminate the atheistic and pantheistic elements", the *Visishtadvaita* doctrine of Ramanuja and the *Advaita* of Sankara give us between them "a theism that is not far from being correct<sup>1</sup>". His qualifications are far-reaching but the researches that these two great Hindu system-builders have so resolutely pursued in different directions combine undoubtedly to predict the true way by which God can discover Himself and has discovered Himself. Similarly Dr. A. G. Hogg in his *Redemption from this World* (pp. 245 ff.) has drawn an interesting parallel between *Advaita Vedanta* and Jewish apocalyptic as — each in a manner suitable to the mind of one or the other of two very different races — agreeing in their "condemnation of the existing system of experience in its entirety as being only imperfectly divine",

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<sup>1</sup> *Vers le Christ par le Vedanta*, p. 37.



and as " seeking under a similar spiritual influence a similar satisfaction ".

The spiritual discipline and the spiritual experience that were obtained in all these explorations of the unknown and in the adjustment of life to the conclusions, however imperfect, that were reached, from a precious possession for the race or the people to whom these things have come as a heritage from the past. Such precious elements as these must remain to form and to adorn the casket of human personality which was created to enshrine the supreme treasure of the Revelation of the divine Father made known in the Incarnation and the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father.

## The Syncretistic Mood in East and West

WILLIAM PATON

"Syncretism" is a word of the study; it smells of the lamp. But the attitude towards religion and the theory about the nature of religion which the word denotes are not merely common; they are far more widely spread than any other, both in the East and in the West.

Syncretism means a "mixing together", and the syncretistic mood in religion is that which, regarding religion as fundamentally of human achievement, seeks to show the essential identity of all forms of belief and worship, slurs over everything which is distinctive, hates discontinuity and is especially uneasy about the idea of revelation. But it is not often clearly defined, because it is almost never militant. There are some militant syncretists to be found in Hinduism, but they are militant not because there is a gospel burning within them, but because they cannot abide the exclusive claims of Christianity. The normal syncretistic mood — and that is why it is so widespread — is passive, not active. It offers a world of reasons why, so far at least as religion is concerned, we should all stay just where we are. It suggests the cultivated spectator, to whom religion affords phenomena for generalisation. It never calls up in the soul the awful sense that choice has to be made and action taken, choice and action on which infinite issues depend.

Syncretism is a feature of all periods of civilisation in which large opportunities exist for mutual knowledge among peoples. Our own age is pre-eminent in this and it is constantly being remarked how great are the resemblances between it and the civilisation of the Roman Empire. The world was smaller then, but within the bounds of the "*Oikoumene*", fostered by the Roman peace, a great commingling of religious ideas went on. Syrian Orontes flowed into the Tiber; Judaism, widely flung, had deep influence wherever it went: the State religion was tolerant of all that was



tolerant of it. It is said that the late J. N. Farquhar and Dr. T. R. Glover were travelling together on the same boat to India and compared notes on their (then recent) books *Modern Religious Movements in India* and *The Conflict of Religion in the Early Roman Empire*. The result was an agreement that, with the necessary change of names, each might have written the other's book !

Today, in spite of the rapid rise of militant and disruptive nationalism, the transit of ideas from one part of the world to the other is easier than ever before in history. Because the dominant civilisation of the day is that of Europe and America, the influence of the culture of the West upon the East is too obvious to need comment. There is, however, a powerful, though less obvious, reciprocal movement. It did not need the missionary activity of the *Ahmadiyahs* in Europe and America or the Buddhist mission in London to make the ordinary, more or less thoughtful man aware of the existence of ancient and subtle religion, tenaciously held by millions of his fellow human beings. The comparative study of religion, in its serious form confined to the few, has, in its popular form, created a widely diffused consciousness that there is a common stuff in all religion and that the stark blacks and whites, the finality and absoluteness of traditional Christian preaching, are no longer up to date. It seems not only plausible but a fair account of the facts to say that the different "religions" are parallel and alternative articulations of what is at bottom a common experience. The personalities that occur in the religious stories may differ, and there is variety in emphasis corresponding to climatic and historical accident. But the essential things are the same. That, or something like it, is, I venture to think, almost orthodox among educated men everywhere.

It is a tolerant, urbane and cultured view. It seems to harmonise with what the anthropologists tell us about the intimate connexion between religion, culture and society. It chimes with the idea of a League of Nations : if the League is based upon a common humanity underlying the separateness of nations, why not recognize the common religiousness of which all religions are just manifestations ?

Let us now examine the thing more narrowly. It is in the Hindu outlook that the world of syncretism has greatest affinity, and it will be worth while to consider the syncretist tendencies of Indian thinking. Nationalism is in India definitely an ally of the syncretist movement. Not only has it tended to rehabilitate the old religion in the lives of thousands of educated people for whom intellectually it was dead, by exciting the emotion of loyalty to all that is of Indian heritage. It has stimulated Hindu scholars to claim as authentically Hindu much that is foreign to it, but is seen to be essential to any presentation of Hinduism that the modern educated world can accept. Dr. Macnicol, writing on Professor Radhakrishnan's book, *East and West in Religion*, says<sup>1</sup> :

*He does not lead the hosts of Hinduism and, if he often attacks Christianity, it is really 'Christian Civilisation' that is his enemy, and he assails it more often with Christian than with Hindu weapons.*

*The fact that this neo-Hindu is endeavouring so to transform his ancestral religion is a fact in which one must rejoice, but it is right that we should realise that what is here presented is something that it is misleading to describe as Hinduism. Thus, for example, all that is associated in Hinduism with the term Maya is omitted from Sir S. Radhakrishnan's outlook... the omission of this doctrine, so central to Hinduism in most of its phases, is due to a desire... to emphasize the significance of the moral struggle in religion, a significance that Hinduism has never been able fully to recognize... He is seeking at all costs to create a moral ardour in his religion, but this is something that cannot be grafted upon the gnarled stem of the ancient system.... The fact is that Hinduism is so fundamentally hostile to Sir S. Radhakrishnan's view of life and of God that he has to make it into a wholly different thing before he presents it to us under the old name.... "*

Like Dr. Macnicol, I rejoice to see that this distinguished Hindu philosopher turns his great gifts to the end of the reform

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<sup>1</sup> *International Review of Missions*, October 1934, pp. 573-4.



of his country's ancient religion and I do not think it is a discourtesy or an unfair criticism if it is suggested that the underlying dynamic in his mind is nationalism. He has learned from Christian, and perhaps from other sources, things that are true and that are not acknowledged in Hinduism and he is determined to show that true Hinduism includes these things, contrary though they may be to its fundamental principles. The syncretism thus involved is none the less real in that it is not acknowledged.

The well-known views of Mr. Gandhi provide us with another instance of the syncretist temper at work. Long ago Mr. Gandhi developed his philosophy of *swadeshi* — "own country". He taught that in any department of life, in manners, language, clothing, food, and in religion, it is right to use that which is "of our own country". He has very strongly held this view in its application to religion. He is continually insisting that while all religions are in his view equally sacred and equally good, he, as an Indian, must adhere to the Indian religion and that all should do as he does and cling fast to that which in religion is *swadeshi* — of one's own country. It is an obvious criticism of this view that whatever may be said of it in regard to clothing or food, it seems totally irrelevant to so great a question as religious truth. The eastern religions themselves have gained great masses of adherents by spreading to lands from which they did not take their origin. This is true of Buddhism in China and Japan; it is true of Islam in India and it is in some sense true of all religion. Every religious advance goes back to some moment of insight of the prophet or seer, and every continent has known the men who, because they saw something to be true, loved not their lives even unto the death in order that they might preach it to others. It is therefore plain that the *swadeshi* attitude towards religion is ultimately agnostic about religious truth. It is, in short, only possible to hold that all religions are equally good and equally true if it is really meant that all are equally false and that therefore it does not matter which we choose.

The fundamental ideas of Hinduism have been referred to as especially sympathetic to the syncretist process.

Syncretism, in a sense, is the genius of Hinduism. Everyone who has lived in India is familiar with the pictures, often cherished by students, of the group of world religious leaders, Krishna, Buddha, Mohammed, later sages such as Ramkrishna and usually the figure also of Jesus Christ. The story was told to the members of the Lindsay Commission, when they toured the Indian colleges, of the student who daily prayed to Krishna, Kali, Buddha, Mohammed, Socrates and Jesus Christ. It is often said that if Christians would only agree, Jesus Christ would be accepted tomorrow in the Hindu Pantheon. The fact is that He has been so accepted, and there are great numbers of Hindus who do sincerely and genuinely reverence His example and count Him among the chief, perhaps even as *the* chief of the manifestations of God. But there is underlying all such idea and practice the doctrine that ultimate reality lies beyond all these manifestations. In a sense they belong to the world of unreality and illusion. They do not belong to the realm of true knowledge.

It must, therefore, be peculiarly difficult for a thoughtful Hindu to accept the idea of the incarnation of God in Christ as the Christian tradition unanimously affirms it, for this Christian teaching affirms not that Christ is one among the many incarnations of the Deity, but that in Him the eternal Son of God once and for all became Man. There is bound up with this a doctrine of the relation of time to eternity and of the particular to the universal, as well as of the meaning of history, in which it is excessively difficult for Hindus to believe.

The case is somewhat different when we consider Islam. It appears (though I cannot claim any expert knowledge) as if Islam were definitely less syncretist in temper than either Hinduism or Buddhism, a fact which is doubtless due to the extent to which Islam is related in the consciousness of Moslems to the words, teaching and personality of Mohammed. Where Muslim mysticism has been greatly developed, as among the Persian Sufis, there we find the syncretist tendency. We are told, for instance, that among Sufi philosophers the great Moslem word "there is no God but God" — a tremendous assertion of the transcendence of God

— has come to have a meaning virtually identical with the *Vedantic* text “ One without a second ”, which is an assertion of the purely monistic view. But this is far from the teaching of Mohammed himself.

There is, however, one thing which ought to be said in justice to the syncretist tendency which is in certain circles so influential in the West. To not a few minds it appeals as humbler, less dictatorial, less “ imperialistic ” than the traditional view of historic Christianity. I venture to quote as an instance of this my dear friend, C. F. Andrews. I once read an article by Andrews in which (writing, it is true, in the heat of the Red Sea) he committed himself to the truly amazing statement that the ideas of Brahma, of Allah and of the Christian God were really all the same. I cannot but feel that it was Andrews’ loving heart that said that, not his head. He had so far rid his soul of every vestige of the white man’s dominating temper that he found it impossible to assert a superiority in the western religion, though no man has more selflessly lived Christ before the Indian people. How often one has heard the same kind of thing said, and most of all by those who love to champion the unpopular cause, who long to enter deeply into sympathy with those of other races, who have a true passion for self-identification with the sufferings of the unprivileged of every kind. There is a sense in which we may say that everyone who wishes truly to preach and live Christ ought to go through that stage. There may be far, far more of Christ in it than in an untroubled dogmatic orthodoxy of expression, which issues from a soul that never has known the passion to be at one with another. I once heard Dr. L. P. Larsen say in a crowd of missionaries at a hill-station that many missionaries needed what he called “ a bath of pantheism ”, and I think I know what he meant.

Nevertheless, it ought to be possible to draw, not only in theory but in practice, a clear line between the assertion of the Christian faith in Christ and any sort of personal assertiveness in the Christian. It is a part of the burden of the white man’s earthly success that for all white missionaries this is a difficulty. It ought to be so easy to show that when we preach Christ we do not mean that we are preaching our-



selves, and that if we can say with St. Paul, "Be ye imitators of me", it is only because we can go on to say with him "even as I also am of Christ".

It is here that the centre of the discussion lies. From what has been said above it is clear that the real alternative lies between the conception of religion as culture, as a rich human achievement, and the conception of revelation. One distinguished Moslem has said that there is no real difference between Christians and Moslems if only the doctrine of the divinity of Christ could be given up. Another well-known Moslem leader once explained to me that I and all others who believed in God were true Moslems. But Christians do not believe in God as a truth of natural religion, they believe in a Father of Whom Christ Jesus is the Son. They have seen the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Probably, therefore, the missionary impulse and conviction must always be somewhat unpopular. It must always be harking back to that which is not ourselves, to that Word of God which, just because it is of God, denies and rebukes our words. In so far as the Christian religion has become a matter of human and national or social culture it will always be easy to find identities between it and other religious cultures, and perhaps it will always seem the part of the tolerant man-of-the-world so to think. And it is not for me to deny that the eternal God in His ineffable love for the world may have spoken in men's hearts and they have been warmed as they heard His word. But woe betide us if we allow such a thought to diminish our sense of the absolute imperative laid upon us by the Word of God in Christ.

## **The Uniqueness of Christ and the Presentation of His Message**

D. T. NILES

The most important problem for us, as Christians, is and ought to be the problem of the message. What is the Gospel? Why should we preach it? How must we preach it? These are questions we ought to be asking ourselves, and shall have to ask ourselves continually.

And whatever the answers we give to these questions are, we know that they stand or fall according as they affirm the uniqueness of Christ, and according as that affirmation is adequate and valid as judged both by the teaching of the New Testament, and the factors of the situation into which the Gospel is brought.

But since Christianity has been a missionary religion here in India itself, for the last few years, there are already with us some of the answers given by those who went before us to the questions we have raised, and given still by many who are among us today. And therefore it is possibly the straightest and easiest course for us to consider these answers in our attempt to find our own answers for our day and generation.

But one may say, "Why should we assume that the answers that have already been given are unsatisfactory and that we must find new answers for our day?" The truth is that we make no such assumption. We shall merely examine the answers in the light of the teaching of the New Testament and the gradually gathering storm of criticism that is coming from many Christian and non-Christian quarters today, and see whether it is necessary for us to restate these answers at all. As for me, if at this stage I may anticipate, I would say that I feel that a restatement of the motive and reason for evangelism is absolutely essential today, and that if such a

restatement is impossible evangelism itself would have to cease. But I believe also that a restatement is possible, a restatement truer to the teaching and emphasis of the New Testament. And if in the first part of this statement the argument seems to be too painfully destructive, may I plead for patience, since the destruction is only a preparation for a constructive attempt ?

First of all, then, let us consider one of the commonest ways in which the answer is given to this whole question :

*I have found something valuable in Christ, and I cannot help but proclaim it to my brother-man.*

But what does "cannot help" mean ? Is it simply that the joy of our discovery flows over and demands to be shared ? We know in our own hearts that we mean more than that. It is the compulsion to many of us of a conviction, that others are seeking for the very things we have found and that we must tell them how they may find them too. It seems the natural thing to do, and yet when thinking of the Gospel is it not essential that we conceive our task in more universal terms than just as a testimony given to men in the grip of drink by a reformed drunkard, or to men in the valley of fear by one who has passed through it ? Merely to do this would be to emasculate the Gospel : and besides, what is the message of a reformed drunkard to men whose problem is not drink ? As for saying, "Christ saved me from drink, He can save you from immorality" — does that seem such a self-evident deduction after all, and a message that will persuade the man whose problem is immorality to make up his mind to go to Jesus Christ ?

And then there is the other and more difficult issue we ought to face — the doubt which says, "But suppose there are other ways of finding what you have found — what then ?" It is an issue we dare not dismiss as merely hypothetical, and especially when we know so well what it costs a man to change his faith. We know the price that a convert has to pay here in India — the sacrifice of things grown dear through years of association, the breaking of relationships which are the most sacred to any man. And we know also



the price that India herself has to pay because of this fact of conversion, in the breaking up of her national life into communal compartments. In the face of this, must we not ask ourselves, "Have we a right to call upon men to do this thing" ?

It will not do to say that Christ Himself predicted that this would happen. True enough, He did say that because of Him, father would be set against son and mother against daughter. But surely we dare not take that as the character of our right to set father against son or mother against daughter, provided we satisfy ourselves that we are doing it in the name of Christ. I say we have no right to cause all this upheaval in the lives of men and women, no right to do something that cuts across national solidarity here in India, simply because we have found something valuable in Christ and cannot help but proclaim it to brother-man. We can have that right, only if it is true that Christ *alone* can give what we have found in Him. Otherwise, as ministers of religion, our duty would simply be to help each man to find satisfaction for the longings of his soul along the way in which he already finds himself either by birth or through circumstance.

And so we pass on to a second answer that is often given to the problem we have set ourselves, the answer that *we proclaim the way of Christ because Christ alone can satisfy the spiritual longings of the human heart*.

But what are these spiritual longings that Christ has satisfied for us which we claim that He alone can satisfy ? Forgiveness of sins, a sense of security in life, the experience of daily guidance, a dynamic for moral victory, a power for present service, — you will agree with me that these are among the commonest and the most insisted upon by Christians as what Christ has done for them. Even we, if we were asked to say what Christ means to us, would, many of us, give our testimony in similar terms : and hence the answer that we have suggested to our problem resolves itself into this, that we claim that we alone who follow Christ can and do speak of our spiritual experience in these terms.

But is that true ? What about Manickavasagar, for instance, as burdened with a sense of sin he pleads for grace to wipe that sin away, and in his extremity turns to Siva, thought of as drinking poison that the world may not be destroyed ? Or again, what about the sense of security in life based on an experience of God as ' all in all ' which breaks through in the songs of Tirunavakarasu ? And then, what about Mahatma Gandhi himself, who in our own day testifies to an experience of daily guidance ? As for moral excellence and the readiness to serve, it is enough to mention Ramakrishna Paramahansa and those who are members of the society which bears his name. And then, one even discovers the very emphasis of Christianity in some of these great men : there is emphasis on faith and grace in Tukaram as he sings :

" Oh God, the efforts all are vain  
By which I' ve sought thy blessed feet to gain,  
Therefore, I come, Oh God, to plead for grace,  
I worthy only of a servant's place."

Or again in Kabir there is the characteristic Protestant emphasis that God meets the seeker irrespective of rites and ceremonies and of holy place ; or still again in Tagore the modern emphasis on service and sacrifice as the characteristic experience of a devotee of God :

" Come out ", he says, " of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense ! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained ? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow ".

What is our answer to these testimonies so like ours, so like the testimonies of countless Christians ?

" But you have picked and chosen the quotations you used ", some might say. I have, but they were there to be picked. " Much of this is due to the percolating influence of Christianity itself ", many of us might affirm, — but apart from the absolute validity of the statement from the point of view of dates, what is the force of the contention itself ? Many Hindus themselves agree that Hinduism as it is today has been profoundly influenced by Christianity — but what they

are concerned about, and we also, is the question of conversion.

"Christ alone can satisfy the spiritual longings of the human heart", is the answer we are considering and in the light of what we see and know and hear, can we say "yes" to that proposition? As for me, I can hear men of other faiths also talking the same language of experience, bearing testimony to a soul-satisfying knowledge of God.

And so we pass on to a third answer that is given to the question we have raised, and given often by a group that feels the difficulties of the two answers we have already considered. And this is what they say:

*We dare not argue about it, for has not Christ Himself told us to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost? And besides, we ourselves have heard His call in our own hearts.*

Now apart from the question of the authenticity of that statement of Jesus, would there not be a strong probability that we have misunderstood our Master's meaning if we are unable to substantiate our right to ask men to follow Him with a declaration of His Uniqueness. And as for feeling a call within our own hearts, such a call unsubstantiated by the logic of facts would be a dangerous foundation on which to build one's life, and more so when it means test and trial for other men.

And yet one must consider at this point that Christ did command His disciples to be witnesses for Him "unto the uttermost part of the earth"; and that simple obedience to this plain command has justified itself in history. In spite of parrallelisms in the spiritual experience of men of different faiths, the fact that so many testify that in spite of ardent and ceaseless search, they did not and could not find their heart's desire anywhere except in Jesus must carry weight as an argument in itself. The fact that the spiritual genius of *any* man is adequate to the apprehension of God in Christ, is an answer by itself to the question, "Is Christ Unique?"



And yet it is not enough of an answer to be sufficient as a basis for an Evangelism which thinks of "the world for Christ". *Any* man can apprehend God in Christ. Yes, but must also *every* man? Is Christ unique?

And so we pass on to a fourth answer which is given, and given by those who are keenly alive to this question of Uniqueness, the answer that *Christ must be the exalted Lord, because of all the teachers and founders of religions, He is the greatest, the noblest, the only sinless and true one.*

He is, certainly, but only as judged by His own standards, and not if judged, for instance, by the standards of the Gita or of Sankara or of Buddha. He did no nishkamya Karma; His works were shot through and through with purposive love. He asserted no identity with the being of all being: He lived claiming unity with God whom He called Father, and maintaining an attitude of piety towards Him which to us seems so human, and yet transcends all human piety in the open-eyed assurance of God which was its fruit. He taught no absolute solution to the problem of suffering nor did He tell men how to escape it — He merely bore it Himself sharing our sin and sorrow, adding to the problem of the suffering of man the deeper problem of the suffering of God, and calling men not so much to escape a life so riddled with suffering, as to seek in Him the strength and the hope to overcome suffering and use it for the building of a bigger life. No, Christ is not the greatest among founders of religions except according to His own standards, and how then shall we assert it of Him when an absolute objective standard outside the various religions does not exist? Along this line of reasoning the Uniqueness of Christ cannot be proved at all. But why not leave alone this question of objective standards? Does not He Himself appeal to the human heart? Call it what we will — the influence of the Holy Spirit, or that the souls of men are naturally Christian, — does not the fact remain that Christ appeals?

It does. He does appeal, and it is only in terms of this appeal, I believe, that the fact of the Uniqueness of Christ

can be stated or His command to us to be witnesses for Him be understood.

As long as the proof of His Uniqueness was made dependent on us, or on comparison, or on anything else except His ability to substantiate His claim through personal appeal, so long we saw how impossible it was really to prove that Uniqueness at all. But let us state the fact of that Uniqueness in terms of Christ Himself and Christ alone, and we shall see that the statements hold. Thus for instance, looking back at the first answer that we talked about, is not the more adequate way of putting it just this — *that we preach Christ not because He has done something for us, but because we believe His claim and His promises that He will do that which is necessary for all men.* And it is as such also that we preach Christ, not as one who saved me from drink, but as one who saves me from sin — my own particular case being but an example of Christ having done what He promised He would do. The proof or the basis of my message can in no case be I or my experience. I, in my own experience, may have even failed to make my own the riches of God in Christ Jesus, but I am still convinced that they are there for me and for my brother also. That I should make my own what God offers to me in Christ Jesus is certainly imperative. It is imperative because I need it, and God wants me to have it; and it is also imperative because as one who is proclaiming the message, I shall be putting myself in the way of its acceptance if my own experience was bankrupt. But God forbid that I should make my own experience either the reason for my preaching the Gospel, or the measure of its meaning.

The Christ of History, the Christ of Eternity — He has appealed to me and won my allegiance, and day by day I am seeking the fulfilment in my own life of all that He has promised to do and to be. But it is the Christ of History and the Christ of Eternity as He bids me follow Him that I preach, — Christ, who as far as my own experience is concerned is the assurance of things I yet hope for, the title deed of a land I have not yet inherited.

Or again, looking back at the second answer we discussed, must we not restate it thus, that *we preach Christ not because He alone can satisfy the spiritual longings of the human heart, but because He alone ought to be the heart's deepest longing.*

Different men are satisfied with different things even as regards spiritual experiences : what men seek is often determined by what they believe, and many of these beliefs are contradictory and cannot all be true : we are really on shifting sand when we make longings of the human heart the basis of any claim or the reason for denying it.

' Christ satisfies our spiritual longings ', we say, but are these longings themselves *in* Christ Jesus ? As His true followers we ought to be constantly and continually asking ourselves that question. Is my spiritual ambition itself really and truly according to His mind and in obedience to his demand ?

He has told us to ask for and work for the Kingdom of God. He has bidden us to seek Eternal Life. He has commanded us to be perfect as is His Father in Heaven. And judged by these standards, are not our spiritual longings, and often the very spiritual experiences, about which we testify, far short of the mark — and sometimes even beside the mark altogether ? And as to us, so to men of other faiths, Christ comes still, making His demands and applying His standards. Yes, men in every religion, Christians and non-Christians, have found what is to them a soul-satisfying experience of God : but Christ alone can say whether God is satisfied also.

" The fullness of the stature of Christ, nothing less and nothing else " — that then is our message to the saints and sinners among men, and our reason for proclaiming it.

Christ is God's will for men. Him has God declared to be His Son with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead ; by which resurrection He has also given assurance unto all men that He will judge the world in righteousness by Him Whom He has thus ordained. And is not this fact of Jesus as the standard the inside of the story of modern Hinduism itself ? We talk of



Christianity percolating through into Hinduism : is it not rather that Hindus are using Christ as the standard to discover the values in their own faith ?

It is a marvel, and there is no marvel greater, says Studdert Kennedy, than this ability of Christ to make Himself God to men. And He is able to do it because He is truly God. Men must be satisfied with Christ alone and Christ alone can satisfy that need. And hence do we introduce Him to our fellowmen and them to Him, because we know and believe that He will not let them alone as He does not let us alone, till both they and we are satisfied in Him, and He is satisfied with us.

And so become significant the other two answers which we considered, that which bases the justification for evangelism on the call and commission of Christ Himself, and that which states His Uniqueness in terms of comparison with the founders of other religions.

Both answers are true. *He does claim the world, and He does bid us announce that claim to all men. And also, He does stand over against the founders of other religions as the word of God to man, the key to unlock the meanings of God in Nature and History, the standard to measure the spiritual insight and achievement of saints in every faith, the test of all values, of all truths, and of all ways of life.*

The Hindu, realising his need of a Saviour God, enshrines his deepest insight in the story of a God who drank poison. But how shall we know that that insight is true ? How shall we know that it is truer than the thought of God as unmoved and unmoving which is found in the same religion itself ? When I am in extremity and despair how can I depend upon it and pray, assured that God is Saviour ? And so the questions rise, till suddenly one catches sight of the figure of the Man of Sorrows toiling up the hill of Calvary, and then doubts fade away. We have no more to depend upon a story, it has become history now. That is Jesus. That is what He does. And that is what He is : dependably, unequivocally, God's word to man.

But is not this too big a claim to make, and how can we ever hope to convince the world of it ? Thank God, while the

claim indeed is great, it has not been left to us to prove it true. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father", said Jesus, "and no one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him". But what is more, He said that He Himself would substantiate that claim. "I, when I be lifted up, will draw all men to Myself". He has substantiated that claim with us, and He calls us simply to lift Him up before the world (to use the phrase in a different sense), that He may substantiate that claim with other men.

And that alone is our task, to preach Him as He is, to announce Him as He claimed to be, to lift Him up, and then to leave Him to deliver the challenge and make the appeal as He did with us when we first met Him on the way of life. I often used to deliver the challenge of Jesus in terms of an experiment. "Taste and see if the Lord is good", I often said to my Hindu and Buddhist friends : but now I feel how unfortunate and inadequate that method was. Christ Himself never called men to experiment with Him. "Follow me", was always His challenge, and to those who would *know* first, the answer was that it is only they that do God's Will that shall learn of the doctrine.

And besides, is it not also obvious that the whole attitude of experiment is not the religious attitude at all ? Experiment is the way of discovery in science, but in the realm of personality only faith and obedience unlock the greatest treasures. One may not follow a captain with the attitude of an experimenter and hope to achieve anything but disappointment. And neither can one with Christ. The sacrifice, the surrender, the owning of loyalty, these cannot be delayed through years of experimentation. The challenge of Christ is always to an immediate response of faith. "Sell all that thou hast and follow me".

But will men accept such a challenge ? Would it not be better to present it in terms of "Try and see" ? The only answer, and a sufficient answer for us, is the words of Jesus, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible". Jesus said this of that rich man who was faced with and turned away from the challenge, and Jesus says it to

us, of every man to whom, in His name, we have to deliver the challenge today.

He will do it, with Him it is possible, the task of conversion is His, He will draw — and our task is simply and merely to set him forth, to lift Him up, to proclaim Him both in word and in deed, and beware lest we interpose anything between Him and the soul He is seeking to save. In our ministry, of course, we shall meet men who find the teaching of Christ as unreasonable as the Greeks found it, or His demands as unacceptable as they were to the Jews, and it will be our privilege and responsibility to try to do for them what Paul did in his day, attempting to show as far as in him lay the reasonableness and the acceptability of Christ.

But whether he succeeded or failed in doing this, Paul proclaimed through life and teaching the Master he served, and so must we, challenging the world and proclaiming with Paul : “ We preach Christ crucified, to some foolishness and to others a stumbling block, but to us and to all men, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God ”.



## The Christian as Witness<sup>1</sup>

KARL BARTH

1. *Witness is a human word to which God gives authority and power to remind other men of His sovereignty, grace and judgment. Wherever human words are invested with this authority there is the Church.*

If the Bible speaks of witness and witnessing it means always human speech addressed to other men, words such as man can speak and hear. Even if it is said in the Bible that God witnesses Himself, that angels are His witness or that (as in the Old Testament) the tables of the law or other objects are called His witness, such speech is meant as is addressed to men. When in Romans 2 : 15 it is said that "the human conscience bears witness", it is added that "the law is written in their hearts", that it is therefore readable. There are, of course, other ways by which God proclaims Himself, for instance His acts. These the Bible calls signs. On the whole we may say, however, that witness means words spoken from man to man. The few exceptions, such as John 5 : 36 and Hebrews 2 : 4, in which works are called witness, simply prove the rule.

This human word has the task to remind man of God's sovereignty, grace and judgment. The word witness is taken from the terminology of law. That God needs witnesses presupposes that there is a lawsuit between God and men. In this process the cause of God, the right of God must be victorious. God calls up witnesses against men who have turned against Him and who are inimical to Him. And these witnesses witness to God's sovereignty, grace and judgment. In the Old Testament they witness to the Covenant which God has established with His people. And in the New Testament they witness to the works, the suffering, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to the revelation of the

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions following this lecture see "Student World Chronicle" p. 355

mystery of God which has been made through Him. Examples are Luke 24 : 48 ; I. John 4 : 14 ; I. John 1 : 2 ; I. John 5 : 11.

This human word God invests with authority. I mean to say that "witness" in the biblical sense is a dynamic word of a very special nature. It is not self-evident that there are words which have the task to remind other men of the sovereignty, the grace and judgment of God. Just as it is not a matter of course that there are such things as the sovereignty, grace and judgment of God, so it is not a matter of course that there are witnesses who are called and enabled to carry out this particular function. Not every man is a witness. Witnesses are the prophets, the apostles and the disciples. The authority to witness does not depend on the special qualities of these men, neither on their piety nor on their activity or suffering (as the later conception of the martyr would have it), but merely on the fact that it is God Who in His process with men has chosen *these* particular men to witness for His cause.

Wherever human words are invested with this authority there is the Church. The Church is the place where the process between God and men takes place and in which God brings forward His witnesses. In the Old Testament it is the People of Israel, in the New Testament the *ecclesia*, the community of Jesus Christ. "On this rock I will build my Church", Matth. 16 : 18, or again : "You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone", Eph. 2 : 20. Wherever this dynamic word of witness is spoken and heard there is the Church.

2. *The original and veritable witness of God is no man but God Himself. At His command and in His service men become, are and remain witnesses of His witness.*

This brings us to the central question. If I can say clearly what needs to be said at this point, I will have given an adequate explanation and if you understand what needs to be understood at this point you will have understood rightly.

We may again start from Eph. 2 : 20, " Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone " and we may compare I. John 5 : 9, " If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater ". Though I have just said that witness is a human word, I must now say that, if we ask who according to the Bible gives witness, we find that it is not man but unmistakably and literally *God Himself*. Both the Old Testament and the New emphasise again and again that it is God Who witnesses to God. An example is I. John 5 : 6, " It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth ". Truth in the Bible means reality which reveals or communicates itself. How could it be otherwise ? How could man bear witness to God ? Man is a creature, a mortal being, a sinner turned away from God. How could he be able to become a witness of God ? For God God must speak Himself and no one else can be sufficient. This is the indispensable insight without which no one can become a witness of God.

The real witnesses have always known and confessed that God is His own witness and that God cannot really use *their* witness. I am not an appropriate instrument in God's hands and if God uses me nevertheless it is nothing short of a miracle. If I speak, I can only speak in the hope that God Himself speaks and my speaking can never be more than a reference to His speaking. God Himself and God alone is the real witness ; but this God allows it to happen (it is the mystery of His will which we cannot fathom or understand or prove) that there are men who in spite of everything become His witnesses. He commands and it happens. This majestic God who lives in a light which we cannot approach calls men and puts words in the mouth of men which they should say in His name. If it is said in Acts 1 : 8, " Ye shall be witnesses unto me ", we can only understand such a commission as an incomprehensible condescension of God. This God with all His holiness and mercy, Who is so far away from us, comes so near that there are men who may really be called His witnesses.

We find a summary of all that the Bible means by witness in the case of John the Baptist. It is said of him that " he was not the light but was sent to bear witness of that light ".



Such is the grace of God that there are men sent by Him. But since it is His *grace*, these men are *not* the light themselves. God witnesses and man assists. The first thing which is necessary for a real witness is to understand this, for only so can he possibly become a witness. And this must also remain the standard of his witness that God is witness and that he has been called by a miracle of God's mercy to become a witness of God's own witness.

3. *A human being becomes witness of God through thankfulness for the fact that God has first given us His own witness.*

This thesis belongs together with the next two theses in which I try to answer the questions, how man can become, be and remain a witness of God. The decisive answer to those three questions has been given in the second thesis, but I must now try to explain it in greater detail.

How can one become a witness? The answer is in the word *thankfulness*. One becomes a witness by recognising that God has already given us His own witness. Thankfulness is the opposite of all egocentric attempts to ascribe to man himself the capacity to become a witness of God. A real witness knows that he has been *made* a witness, that he has been chosen for this task and that God's witness has already been given. This thankfulness must not simply exist in the insight that God is in heaven and that we are on earth, that God is the Lord and that we are the servants. It must take the very concrete form that man does not only look towards heaven but also to the witness of God which he finds on earth, in his life and in the reality of human history. The witness does not begin as the very first witness. He must look back to those witnesses of God who were before him and he has to accept their witness. He is obedient to God and to the men who have given him this witness. We may think of Psalm 119 which repeats endlessly this one thing, that what we live by, what we hope for, what we want to hear and to say is God's witness, His justice and His commandment. The man who wrote this psalm becomes a real witness because he recognises that witnesses exist already. Similarly the prophets do not begin

their work in some enthusiastic mood but take their stand on the basis of the Covenant which God has made with Israel and they say nothing else but what God has always said to His people. They enter into the ranks of their fathers and proclaim God's way in constant reference to them. Again, in the New Testament, the word of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, "I have not come to destroy the law or the prophets", must be taken very concretely. That is why Paul, who understood better than the other apostles that with Jesus Christ something absolutely new had come into the world, said also in Romans 3 : 21, that "Christ is being witnessed by the law and the prophets". Thus as a messenger of Jesus Christ he also enters the ranks of the witnesses which have preceded him. The utterly new thing which he has to say, he proclaims at the same time as the very old thing which God has always said. In other words what matters for us Christians, if we would become witnesses, is not in the first place whether we have the Holy Spirit, but quite simply whether we understand what it means that we have been baptised and that we are, therefore, members of the Church of Jesus Christ. If we remind ourselves of our baptism, we are reminded of the certainty of the Word of God which overcomes the world because it has overcome ourselves. The great question which the witness must first ask is : "Has anything been said to you so that you can go and speak to others ?" Yesterday in the discussion it was asked whether those things which have been said for the Christians are also true for the world as a whole ? The question reveals a lack of understanding of what thankfulness really means. For if the life of a witness begins really with thankfulness for all that God has already given to us then it will never occur to him to say anything else to the world than this one thing. The chief question is then whether we are sufficiently thankful for all that we have received. In this thankfulness for the witness which has come to us we should show our thankfulness for God's own witness.

4. *A human being is witness of God through reverence in which he subordinates his own word to the witness of God.*

How does it happen that a man actually witnesses of God? The answer is in the word *reverence*. Reverence is the attitude of the servant, of one who does not carry out his own plans but waits for a commandment. Reverence is closely akin to respect and *respicere* means "to look toward". In other words witness is given where men look toward all that God commands, where their autonomy is called in question and where they are no longer their own lords. We may again think of John the Baptist who was "a burning and a shining light", a man sent by God, but who did not present his own message, or some truth which he had found by himself. His message was rather the message of another message. "He that has the bride is the bridegroom". John points to another one, to Jesus Christ. "Behold the lamb of God". He is like a sign-post without importance of its own. His greatness is that he points away from himself to the other one: "He must increase, but I must decrease". In him we see that to be a witness cannot mean that man has a hobby of his own which fills and enthuses him, that we dare not speak with the pretention: *I* have something special to say to you. Of course, he has something to say, but it is all a reminder of the fact that God has said something and that He will again say something.

This brings us to a further central point. The Church does not confront the world with a message consisting of certain ideas and conceptions about the situation of the world, but really only with a book in its hand and has no other possibility than to witness to this book and to explain it. If we are asked, what have you to say? we can only answer: let us listen to what is said *here*. As soon as our own ideas become our main theme, our witness becomes impure. Instead of saying: "He must increase but I must decrease", we become little philosophers, little theologians who may have deep and real concerns, who may be full of goodwill, but who are no longer real witnesses. For a witness, according to the Bible, is one who explains what the prophets and apostles have said. Man, of course, has his own ideas and convictions, for he stands in life in a particular concrete situation, but these he must subordinate in order that it may become clear:



He is the Lord and I am the servant. We cannot avoid that we express *also* our own ideas and convictions, but all these must be sifted through the Bible. We must not want to become masters in addition to the One master. And we are not only asked to subordinate ourselves to God in heaven, but also to make our reverence concrete on earth. That is why the Bible enters into the situation, giving us the standard of our speaking and living.

5. *A human being remains witness of God in the hope that God will give him again His own witness.*

We hear in the Bible not only of people who *are* witnesses but also of those who *remain* witnesses. We hear not only of witness which is like a lightening from heaven (which all real witness will always be) but we hear also of the existence of people who have the task throughout their life to go on witnessing. And we must therefore ask, how it is possible that there are men from whom we can expect witness again and again, men who can enter into the ranks of which the apostles and prophets form the beginning, men who can continue to remind others of God's sovereignty, grace and judgment. Here again we must say that this can only be so because of the miracle of God's mercy. For God is not bound to men, not even to His prophets and His apostles. They are rather bound to Him. And it is not the personal, not even the religious or moral qualities of these men which have made them into prophets and apostles, nor can these constitute a guarantee that they will remain so throughout their lives. No, if these men are not only sometimes witnesses but remain so, this can only be true because they are constantly living in *hope* that the same God Who has witnessed through them will again use their witness. If I am unfaithful (and every real witness knows that he *is* unfaithful), God remains nevertheless faithful and does not withdraw His promise. Thus a witness of Jesus remains witness by constantly praying : *Veni creator spiritus !* He is not like a man who sits in front of a source and who knows that the water will be flowing on without interruption. No, if he can continue in his Christian life, this is only possible because God *creates*. When we asked the question, how one becomes a witness, we were re-

mind of baptism. We must now remind ourselves of the other Christian sacrament, namely Holy Communion, for it says precisely this, that Christ gives Himself for us, that He nourishes us with His own life. Thus Holy Communion is the sacrament of hope, the sacrament of the future. Christian life is not life between birth and death but rather between Baptism and Holy Communion, which proclaims continually the presence of Christ Who sets in order all that we can never set in order again. Our hope consists in having Jesus Christ before us as the One Who makes good what we have spoiled. The man who walks on this road, who goes to Holy Communion, who has this future, will remain a witness. For he does not take his stand on his own goodness or piety but on the knowledge that God is right, for He has been right in Jesus Christ against all men, for all men.

Since the moment when Jesus said "It is finished", our future and the future of the world has become clear and the way for the witness of Jesus Christ has been opened up. He lives under the sign: "Thy Kingdom come".

6. *"The Christian as witness" is the human being who is fleeing from the wisdom and foolishness of his own human word to the witness of God. In this flight always and nowhere else the Church becomes visible.*

This last thesis is the summary of the preceding theses. The Christian as witness is a disciple of the biblical witnesses. Now in this connection it is much easier to be a master than to be a disciple; for we would all like to become masters and to feel that we have really come to understand the Bible and the biblical witness sufficiently to go beyond them. In this school, however, we must remain disciples all our life. In fact, we must become increasingly disciples and give up our little excursions in our private balloons.

What can we learn in this school? I have tried to express it through the image of a flight. This means in any case a most dynamic movement. It does mean that something happens and no one should therefore complain that this does not leave room for sufficient human activity. But this activity is a movement in a very particular direction. Man

escapes from the wisdom and foolishness of His own word, for from both of these he must hurry to the witness of the biblical word. If I had merely said that we have to escape from the foolishness of our human word, you would find it easier to understand me and agree with me. But the real enemy from whom we must flee comes only then in sight when we consider that we are also to escape from the wisdom of our own words. For only if we take these two together : our stupidity and our lucidity, our errors and our insights can we understand what is the true barrier for man to come to God and to become His witness. It is against this mixture of wisdom and foolishness which we are, that God has to represent His case. Against this creature God's case must be defended, this creature God loves, this creature He would save and in order to do so to him must be given God's witness.

We must, therefore, see very clearly that we have to do with two different realities, on the one hand this creature with its wisdom and foolishness, on the other hand God's witness. And the road leads from the second to the first. The two come together but only so that God comes to man, for God is right and I am wrong. God loves me and I live by the strength of His love. The relation is comparable to a conversation in which the one has to speak and the other to listen.

It is essential to understand that we must escape from ourselves, including our own wisdom. When I say wisdom I do not mean merely our secular wisdom but very specially our Christian wisdom, the wisdom of theology for instance. Last night a story was told of an Asiatic professor who believed that he had found the climax of wisdom in using Karl Barth for his inner and Karl Marx for his outward life. This is a classical example of a person who, instead of escaping from his wisdom, tries to save himself by it. In his case the great question is whether he is willing to leave both Karls beyond to make a sharp turn and go as quickly as possible in the other direction.

Do we really know that we must flee ? Or do we still expect something from ourselves ? If so we are not yet able to become witnesses of God. Man is the starting-point, but nothing more than the starting-point. St. Paul says



therefore that he forgets those things which are behind and reaches forth unto those things which are before. The point of arrival is the witness of God. There is not only a word of human wisdom and foolishness but also a word of the wisdom and foolishness of God.

Have we got it ? Do we know it ? We do not want to escape in order to deny the world. No, those who understand this will make their change of direction joyfully because they know that it is a positive thing and that there is a goal to which they are travelling : the witness of God. Have we already discovered that our wisdom and foolishness are things which we must leave behind and that God's wisdom and foolishness are the fortress to which we must flee ? At this point the decision is taken whether we ourselves will be witness of God. I can only remind you of the prophets and apostles who have actually taken the decision. If we are their disciples we must do what disciples have always to do, namely to learn. The whole burden of my address is therefore that I call you to enter the school in which this flight is being taught. It is in this place and nowhere else that the Church becomes visible. For the Church is there where this master is the only master and where the disciples want to learn from Him alone.

## Co-operation with other Faiths

L. P. LARSEN

When people come across the title of this paper, which has been given to the writer, there are some in whose minds a strong feeling of opposition is stirred at once. It looks to them as a betrayal of loyalty to Christ; it suggests to them the idea, if not that all religions are equally good, at any rate that men do not all need Christ.

There are others — and also people who earnestly desire to follow and serve Christ — who regard the attitude suggested by this phrase as something urgently needed in the world today. They think with sorrow of the harm that has been caused in the past by religious controversy and intolerance; they are greatly impressed by the serious dangers of indifference or definite opposition which threaten religious life in most parts of the world today; and they are convinced that where religious longings and aspirations have gone out of men's lives, it is more difficult to find a way for the Gospel of Christ to reach the heart and the conscience. They are, therefore, convinced that Christians and other religionists stand for a common cause.

Again there are many who are not prepared, when these two views are presented to them, to identify themselves with either of them, accepting the one as wholly right and rejecting the other as altogether wrong. They understand something of what each side pleads for, the dangers each wants to avoid and the truth each wishes to hold fast.

As long as the problem is a mere question of thought we may rest satisfied with a position where we recognise what is true on this side and what is right on the other, without seeing how the two may be combined in a manner that will help us to find guidance for conduct and action. But our present problem is not merely a theoretical and dialectic question.

We want such light on it as will make it possible for us to "walk", not merely to think.

The first thing then which we need to see clearly is that the question of vital importance before us is not so much a matter of our views regarding other religions, as of our *attitude to the followers of other religions*. Our chief concern is not with systems but with living men and women. To those whose interest in others is primarily that of students, the difference between the intellectual and the personal aspects of this question, and of other similar problems, may not be evident; but if we live in the midst of those other people and are inspired by a desire so to understand them that it may be possible to get close to them, the distinction between systems and persons cannot be ignored. A knowledge of the religious thought and practice of the people around him is indispensable to a missionary who wishes to be used by God to commend the Gospel of Christ. But his chief concern is not with their religious systems but with the people themselves.

Judging by terminology one sometimes gets the impression that the work of Christian missions is regarded as a war between religions, as if Christianity were out to fight and overcome Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or whatever is the religion of the people among whom Christian mission work is being carried on. We have frequently reason to remind ourselves that people's intentions are not always as wrong as their language. But the language has a tendency to influence the mind. It is desirable therefore — especially where important issues are affected — to do what we can to bring our terminology in line with our real intentions.

Christians in Europe and America do not always seem to realise how Hindus and others feel when their religious and social systems are being held up to criticism (or even ridicule) by foreigners who do not give the impression that they think of weaknesses and defects in India (and elsewhere) with a desire to help but rather to prove their own superiority. Those who have begun to think of this question will understand why Christian missionary work is often described as "religious imperialism". Fortunately there are many mis-



sionaries who feel that the expression "foreign conquerors" describes one of the greatest dangers to which by the very nature of their work they are exposed. They realise that it is not enough to be free from motives and intentions of that kind in their own minds, but it is also necessary that they should not give people around them any such impression.

Missionaries are sent out, not to win victories over other faiths, but to commend the truth of God to every man's conscience. Many of us are being reminded so frequently and so strongly of the danger of self-seeking in all our work for others that we feel deeply how serious it is if our work gives others the impression of aiming at the spreading of *our* religion and the growth of *our* Church. People's impression may be wrong. But when we have been sent out to present Christ, the very possibility of this impression being created is so grave that we have reason to be exceptionally careful not to give any ground for it. One of the hardest things that are being said about us in India (and probably in other countries as well) is the accusation that we are more concerned about people coming into the Christian Church than about their finding Christ and coming to Him, and that we are thinking much more of the "conversion" which means a change of religion than of that (real) conversion which means a change of mind in relation to God.

These are the dangers which arise if we think of foreign missions in terms of religious systems. It is a matter of very real importance that we help one another to avoid the creation of these misunderstandings.

But what then is the right attitude of the missionary to the people among whom he is living and working? The better we understand this question the clearer it will become that this is a matter which concerns every Christian who lives among people some of whom have not yet come to know Christ and to believe in Him. All Christians, wherever they live, are to commend Christ to others. We are not to preach the Gospel to the people of India because they are Hindus and Mohammedans but because they are men who need Christ and do not know Him. It certainly makes a difference in our approach that they belong to and are rooted

in another religion. This makes it necessary for the Christian to know that whole world of traditions, ideas and practices by which their minds and lives have been influenced. But the task of the Christian, the objective which he is to keep before himself is everywhere the same. We are to help people, whether in India or in the West, so to know Christ that in a real sense they may be able to say what the first disciples said (John 1:14) : " We saw His glory ". The work of Christ's disciples and fellow-workers everywhere is to " prepare the way of the Lord ". We are not to do the work which only the Lord Himself can do. We cannot " convert " people or make people Christians. And if we try to do it, it will be badly done. But God does want to use us to prepare the way, to get those hindrances (of many kinds) removed which make it impossible for the Lord to come so close to people that they are able to see what He is like and to hear what He says to them.

There are people everywhere who hold that it is narrow-mindedness and arrogance that make Christians go out to offer their " gospel " to others who have not asked for it. It is Christian intolerance, we are often told, to think and say that Christ is the only one through Whom men everywhere must be saved. Here again it is impossible to understand things aright as long as we think only in terms of systems. We must come so close to people — to some at any rate of the followers of those other religions — that there is a little in us of that mind which Christ emphasised so much, a real friend's mind. We know perfectly well that we may be misled by genuine feelings. It is risky, in several ways, to love our neighbour. But if we are to walk in the way which Christ has shown us and has called His disciples to follow, we cannot avoid this risk. It may be that we are much less in danger of going wrong in our ideas and estimates if we deal only with systems, but we cannot help people — at any rate not as Christ wants us to do it — unless we venture out into that risky realm where the head may not always be kept as cool as logic prefers.

If we are being taught by Christ we know that we cannot love our neighbour as ourselves unless we have begun to learn

so to love God that we give to Him in all things the place of pre-eminence. That may sometimes look narrow and intolerant and arrogant. At times there may actually be elements of these ugly things in our mind and in our conduct. Wherever that happens we are reminded afresh that the desire for personal aggrandisement and self-seeking does not at once disappear after we have begun to be taught and trained in the school of Christ, and we should then be careful not to begin to argue or to defend ourselves, but to take the publican's place and to turn to God with the publican's prayer. Such experiences must drive us to God to receive from Him the grace that not only forgives but also cleanses and renews. Men are to see our good works — the fruit of God's grace in our lives — in order that they may be led to glorify God. They are not to see our good works and praise us. They are to see God's glory through us and then not to think of us but of Him of whose glory they have caught a glimpse.

We are not to be any more limited in our sympathy and in our desire to help people than those are whose motive and outlook are purely philanthropic. Christ's sympathy was as wide as human need and suffering. Wherever He saw these His compassion was stirred; wherever He was moved with compassion He was ready to help; and where men were ready to receive His help there was no limit to His power to help those in need.

But one thing is plain from all we know about Christ's life among men. Giving the hungry food, healing the sick and comforting those in sorrow were with Christ means to the end that dominated His whole life. We see that very clearly in the story of the ten lepers that were healed. One of them came back to thank him by whom he had been healed of the dreadful disease; the nine others were so full of joy at the gift they had received that they forgot the giver. The story shows us very clearly that Christ was disappointed at the forgetfulness of the nine. He had evidently been wishing that the help He gave them should have led them to see a little of God's glory. But He had helped them because they needed the help. And Christ's love was of that perfect



kind which asks only what the other one needs and is then ready to give as much as the needy one will receive. Christ was ready to help all who came to Him with their suffering and sorrow. He was not satisfied unless they were ready to receive the best He had to offer. But He did not bargain with those who came. He gave to every one as much as he was ready to receive.

This is clearly the mind that was in Jesus Christ and this mind is to be in His disciples too. Not in missionaries only, but also in them. The missionary's power may be limited in several ways ; but the fundamental question is not how great his resources are, financial, intellectual or physical, but whether he has in him the mind that was in Christ Jesus. If he has, he is not narrow even if to some he may seem to be more religious than humanitarian in his efforts to help men.

In this work of helping and giving relief there should be no trace of superiority or condescension. It is important to avoid this, not in order that the missionary may get a good name, but because all that he does along this line should reflect God's mind to those around him. The desire to be great and " to receive glory from men " is so deep-rooted in the nature of most of us that the missionary has much reason to be always on his guard against this danger.

Christ's mind and Christ's way of helping will not allow us to forget that as God wants the work to be done, " burdens " — both of sin and of suffering — can only be taken away by one who will " bear " them. We cannot do this by mere organisation and by paying somebody else to carry out the work. The better we learn to follow Christ's way, the less room will there be for any disturbing feeling of superiority or condescension. There is room enough for organisation and co-operation ; but the distinctively Christian way of removing burdens cannot be altered or improved by any financial or administrative resources. It is as true for the mission field today as it was for the early Christian Church, that Christ's law for His disciples is that we are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6 : 2). This law surely applies equally where one of the partners is not yet a baptised disciple. The missionary — whether he is a foreigner or not — must

seek help from God to live the life of sharing, both joys and sorrows, with the people around him.

This term "sharing" like the expression "co-operation" has sometimes made Christian people apprehensive of compromise and syncretism. We may need to be warned against the dangers indicated by these two terms (we very frequently also need to be reminded what syncretism really means). But here again it is necessary to remember that a road is not necessarily wrong because it involves certain dangers. We know that the life of "sharing" means the life of larger happiness and of growing helpfulness. How far it is possible to go in sharing is a question which cannot be determined by general rules or principles. What Christ has said about meeting others with a friend's mind leaves little room for doubt that there is to be no other limit than that which is imposed by the partner's lack of readiness to share.

This question has sometimes given rise to difficulties when the principle is applied to prayer. Is it possible to pray together with — not merely in the presence of — those who are not Christians? And if that is to be done, what special responsibility does it impose on the one who leads in prayer, in regard to language and subject matter? How much of this can be done without compromise? This is too big a question to be discussed here. But one may perhaps again be allowed to suggest the importance of a background of close contact and personal interest for any fruitful consideration of the question. This does not mean that we are necessarily saved from error if only we base our thinking on experience. It surely is by following the way of sharing with one another rather than by "laying down the law" that missionaries may hope for some progress in mutual understanding where at first the consciousness of differences stood between us.

This takes us to one more aspect of the question of sharing and co-operation. If we are to be able to help others as Christ wishes it to be done, we must come to know and understand each other in a manner that makes openness and confidence possible. That is surely a very important part of what Christ wants to say to us by calling Himself

"the Son of man". An outsider and a stranger cannot be expected to understand us fully and will therefore meet with an attitude of caution and reserve. We have frequently forgotten in our study of other religions that personal life, in all its aspects, can never be fully understood from without. If I am to make any real progress in understanding a Hindu, I must get him to show himself to me, to allow me to see him from within. And this remains true also if I am to help him to know what it means to be a Christian. We are not to compare, to argue and to prove. All this keeps us within the province of the intellectual life. We must in some measure open our lives to one another, share with one another that which really means something to us, if we are to be able to understand one another. Only thus is there any possibility of presenting to others what God has given to us and shown to us in Christ.

And we must go one step further. Along the line of frank and friendly sharing with one another it is not only the missionary who may be helping the Hindu. He may himself thereby be helped to understand more fully the greatness of God and the richness of God's gift in Christ. Here again we cannot afford to forget that dangers may be lurking along the road. But it would be entirely wrong to think that such spiritual fellowship necessarily means an attempt to lay another foundation or add to the foundation that has been laid by God in Christ.

We need the help of God's Spirit at every step, that we may get light from God. We must live close to God and close to men if we are to be used to prepare the way of the Lord and to commend Christ to every human conscience.

## Christianity and other Faiths in China

P. C. Hsu

Professor W. E. Hocking, writing on "Christianity, other Religions and Non-Religions" urges the necessity that a modern mission make a positive effort, first of all to know and understand the religions around it, then to recognise and associate itself with whatever kindred elements there are in them<sup>1</sup>.

That this attitude marks a radical departure from that of traditional Christianity is quite clear. Historically speaking, Christianity, though originated from Judaism, has always regarded itself as *the* religion. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time.... but I say unto you....". "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations...". Thus, the founder of the Christian religion, if we accept the authority of Matthew, seems to be conscious of having outgrown Judaism and of his mission of world conquest. From the very beginning, Christians believed that there was only one God and that Jesus Christ was God Incarnate. With this conviction, Christians refused to have any intercourse and at time came into open conflict with other religions. They successively withstood the persecution of Rome and later converted the Barbarians who invaded Europe, thus laying the foundation of modern Europe.

But on the other hand, this attitude has also been responsible for several unfortunate results. First, Christians, because of this intolerance, have failed to appreciate the good in other religions, thus making real understanding or cooperation difficult, if not impossible. Thus Christianity in propagating itself as *the* religion, has tended to justify methods not in accordance with the true spirit of Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Rethinking Missions* p. 33.



Religious wars, inquisition, "toleration clauses", are instances only too well known. Lastly, when the Reformers broke away from the Roman Church and set up the Bible as the sole authority, internal discussions at once set in, because no two individuals interpreted the word of God exactly in the same way. Professor Hocking must have these unfortunate results in mind, when he urges the necessity for us of making a *positive* effort.

That Christianity should make such an effort to understand and to cooperate with other religions may be urged on another ground, viz. Christianity is now facing a new age. The machine, the collective man are rapidly usurping the place of religion. Non-Christian religions are also re-asserting themselves. Under the circumstances several questions may well be raised : — (1) Should Christianity pursue the same tactics as before, namely, to assert dogmatically its uniqueness and supremacy, and thus run the risk of perpetuating its isolation or even tension with reference to other religions ? (2) If Christianity should "come out of its shell" and establish points of contact with other religions, should a limit be set to the amount of exchange and intermingling ? (3) How can we have a Christianity that is at once openminded towards other religions, yet firm in its convictions ? (4) What is it in Christianity that is unique and therefore must not be compromised ? (5) How can this uniqueness be established ? The remainder of this article will accordingly be devoted to these questions in the light of conditions in China.

However, it will be impossible to answer these questions without a fair grasp of the religious situation which obtains in China. From the printed page, one would certainly gather the impression that China has gone a long way in dispensing with religion altogether. The Anti-religious movement of 1922, and its subsequent activities is a well-known chapter to the readers of *The Student World*. Though it has subsided since, yet its influence seems to have lingered on. At least, few leaders of thought are counselling people to turn to religion. Science, nationalism, communism, and military preparedness are among panaceas prescribed, but not religion. On the other hand, due to famine, banditry and other

hardships of life, there seems to be a deep religious longing on the part of the masses, though this is rarely mentioned in print. This being the case, both Buddhism and Confucianism are making new attempts to convert the nation. In Canton, the governor and his associates require all students in the province to study the Classics of Confucius. In many cities, the Buddhists organise lectures, schools, relief work and what not. In the midst of these currents and cross-currents, how is Christianity going to re-orient itself ?

In surveying the religious situation in China, one must further remember the fact that Christianity is still labouring under the handicap that it was introduced into China by force of the imperialistic nations. Though potentially great, it is only a small group, numerically speaking, (less than 1% of the entire population). It used to lead in education, medicine and several other fields, but today it has largely lost its leadership. However, imperialistic associations may in time be devested, numbers may increase and lost leadership may be regained though not necessarily in the same fields. That which at once constitutes a great hindrance and a challenge is the fact that, in the realm of ideas, Christianity and Chinese philosophy are diametrically opposed to one another. Christianity is theistic and regards man as incapable of saving himself from sin except through the grace of God ; whereas Chinese philosophy is humanistic and considers man as capable of realising high ideals through his own effort. This humanistic idealism is taught by both Confucianism and Buddhism, and is being re-enforced by modern materialistic and idealistic philosophies of the West. New Buddhism, for instance, often pours ridicule on the Christian conceptions of creation and of supernatural salvation. Should one yield to the temptation of compromising by squaring theism with humanism ? As the difference here is so fundamental, one must refuse to compromise, before a living synthesis is worked out, for the uniqueness of the Christian religion just lies herein<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Rethinking Missions* Ch. III.

If supernatural salvation, mediated through Jesus-Christ, God-incarnate, is the unique message of Christianity, we must further ask : How can this unique message be convincingly brought home to the Chinese mind ? Here one would hesitate very much to use the old method of dogmatic assertion and the old attitude of stern denunciation of non-Christian religions. Further, one would plead for mutual sharing among the different religions<sup>1</sup>.

Several arguments have been advanced against mutual sharing, but none seems to be really valid. For instance, it has often been maintained that because Christianity is absolute, therefore it should not have anything to do with other religions which are not absolute. This is certainly strange logic. If the absolute refuses to associate with the relative, then how can the relative partake of the absolute ? Remember that Jesus was a friend of " publicans and sinners ". What makes the problem more complicated, however, is the fact that both Confucianism and Buddhism claim to be absolute. When two or more religions claim to be absolute, insistence on such claims by them all does not settle the question. Sometimes, Christians try to get around the difficulty by refusing to regard Christianity as a religion, but they seem to overlook the fact that there are many Confucianists and Buddhists who would be only too glad not to employ this hackneyed term. No, uniqueness can only be demonstrated, not asserted. As the Chinese proverb says : " Real gold is not afraid of being tested by fire ", so will Christianity prove its uniqueness and absolute worth by freely intermingling with other religions. Further, Christians should be prepared to give way to some other religion, if that should prove to be superior, as result of this intermingling, though in point of fact, it is not likely to be the case.

Christians sometimes defend the " closed door " policy by pointing to the antithetical character of open-mindedness and zeal. Whereas this dilemma may be real for some people, it must be pointed out that the anti-thesis involved is not necessary. Open-mindedness and zeal are certainly not

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<sup>1</sup> See *Re-thinking Missions* pp 46-48.

mutually exclusive. Zeal at the expense of open-mindedness marks a lack of confidence in the ultimate efficiency of truth, which is bound to triumph. If we really believe that truth is one and effective, then let us rejoice in truth, no matter where it may be found. Further, we must let in every religion which claims to have seen truth, and let its claims be tested out in the Commonwealth of Religions, where due esteem is given to each for what it is worth. "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven". Herein lies the real challenge.



## THE EDITORS'S TRAVEL DIARY

*Two weeks at the beginning of the summer spent partly at the foot and partly on the top of the white four-thousand-meter mountains of the Valais were a necessary preparation for the descent into the valley of conferences. The series began at Oxford where the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.s met in the attractive setting of Balliol College. If any proof were needed of the extent to which the Y.M.C.A. and our Federation are personally and spiritually related to each other, it was offered by this meeting. For not only did one meet a great many former and present Student Christian Movement leaders (beginning with Dr. Mott who was full of his experiences in South Africa where he had visited many universities), but there was also a noteworthy emphasis on those issues which have kept us busy in the Federation during the last few years.*

*There followed a glimpse of the Conference on Industrial Reconstruction at Whitelands College, London, which represented an important step forward in the pioneer work of the British S.C.M. in the difficult realm of industrial ethics. Although I had specially come to consult the conference leaders about the plans for a World Conference of the Federation on Social and Industrial Problems, I had time enough to be impressed by the uniqueness of the British approach. In most other countries one finds Christian students raising fundamental questions about the whole structure of our industrial order but forgetting the problem of the next step. The Whitelands Conference, however, gave much time to a thorough study of the actual possibilities in the present situation and less consideration to the underlying questions of Christian ethics and sociology. Is this not an additional reason for the holding of a world meeting where the two equally necessary approaches may be confronted with each other ?*

The Federation " au grand complet ".

*The Châtaigneraie Conference of this summer was in its composition more representative of the Federation as a whole than any of its predecessors. In addition to the European countries, Australia, Canada, China, India and the U.S.A. were well represented. Other notable differences between this meeting and the previous Vaumarcus or Châtaigneraie*

meetings were that the day's programme began with a period of Bible study, followed by discussion in groups and that it ended with a liturgical service, generally held in the fine little chapel of Chavannes-Bogis. These two experiments (experiments in so far that they had not been tried in a larger international conference) seem to have been appreciated. There is, however, still much room for improvement. The Bible periods will have to become much more definitely study periods and the services will have to be worked over a good deal before they can become the regular liturgies for Federation Conferences. But the fact that instead of discussing "in the air" we discussed the book, the message of which holds us together, and that instead of listening to more "talk" at the end of the day, we worshipped together through the great classical prayers and hymns of the Church, is not merely an expression of a new religious fashion but rather a definite step forward in our common spiritual life. Though at first it may seem that we get farther apart as we discover the "strangeness" of other conceptions of the Bible or of other forms of liturgy, we will on the long run come nearer to each other in this way than in any other way. For these are the stable foundations without which corporate Christian life becomes mere sentimentality.

Among the speakers Karl Barth was, of course, the dominating personality. This would have been so in any case but it became doubly true because Dr. Van Dusen was suddenly prevented from coming and so, instead of listening to a lecture in which a strongly different note was struck, we spent more time discussing with Professor Barth or, as one delegate called it, in imitating pygmies throwing darts at an elephant. The result was that the whole conference was far more one-sided than a Federation Conference ought to be. Was this year's Châtaigneraie therefore less valuable? It became clear in the discussion on the last day that there were very different opinions on this point. Interestingly enough the difference was by no means geographically conditioned. Some seemed to wonder whether there was a plot in the air to "Barthianise" the Federation. Others, however, expressed their gratitude for the homogeneous and intransigent message of the conference.

My personal impression is that it was a very good and a very necessary thing to confront the Federation with Karl Barth (and Karl Barth with the Federation), for I believe that whether we like his theology or not, we should at least face it and struggle with it. I sympathise, however, with those who considered that this Conference did not truly represent the life of the Federation as a whole and that therefore it should not be repeated in quite the same manner. They should, however, not forget that the form which the programme took was partly due to "force majeure" and partly to the fact that once you get a man with an unusually strong conviction and with power to proclaim it, you have to accept

the consequences. "Representativeness" is important in our Federation because it hangs together with spiritual honesty but there are other no less important considerations, one of which is that there must be place among us for burning Christian convictions.

As I try to visualise what that means in practice, my thoughts go to the Federation leader who is going to leave us as an active worker and to whom we said good-bye on a semi-gay, semi-solemn evening. Pierre Maury has been a real leader among us because he combined unshakable convictions with a true catholicity of interest in persons and ideas. We will miss our Federation pastor!

The days following the Châtaigneraie Conference were days of hard work for the Executive. The trouble is that the volume of work and plans is steadily growing while our resources remain at best stationary. Only far-reaching decentralisation can solve the problem. It was however a young and happy Executive meeting, such as makes one realise the enormous privilege of being allowed to work with persons of utterly different background who count these differences for nothing compared to their common relation to Christ.

### Digging into the Oecumenical Problem

Although I gave only a few lectures at the First Oecumenical Seminar for theological students held in Geneva in August, I must not overlook it in this Diary, for it has become clear to me that it represents one of the most hopeful and thorough pieces of work for Christian understanding. To spend three weeks listening to and discussing with outstanding theologians of the different confessions is an experience which means something for the rest of one's theological life. This was the first summer course of this kind and it was therefore not yet sufficiently well attended. The Federation should go out of its way to make sure that in future years many of its members avail themselves of this unique opportunity.

I cannot leave this subject without making mention of a very tragic event. One of the most active students at the Seminar, who also took part in a number of meetings of the Châtaigneraie Conference and who was a valued member of the Dutch S.C.M., was killed soon after while he was climbing the Dents Blanches. Some of us had great expectations of Warner van Lennep. As a student at Marburg and at Oxford he had begun to be deeply interested in questions of Church Unity and he wanted, therefore, to help in the Faith and Order Movement. His passing-away is one of those mysteries of God's Providence which we cannot understand but merely accept in the faith that God's love surrounds him.

## The First Federation Conference in North Eastern Europe

*The Federation had often sent secretaries and visitors to the Baltic countries but never yet had it tried to create special contacts between the North Eastern European Student Christian Movements through a special area-conference. This is strange, for these movements have much more in common than many other groups of movements which have established contacts long ago. What a privilege to be able to confer in one language and to deal with only two confessions in a meeting of eight nations !*

*It was a very intimate and homogeneous meeting, almost a family-affair. This was not only due to the atmosphere of the Saldus parsonage and to the truly pastoral care of Pastor Vanag and his wife for our material and spiritual welfare but also to the concentration of our whole energy on the immediate and personal implications of the Gospel for our own lives and for the life of our movement. While our discussion of the various modern movements of evangelism, many of which are very active in the northern countries, showed that we differed in our conceptions of true evangelism, we were all at one in our great desire to break away from mere discussion and to let the call to personal decision become again the central pre-occupation of our movement. For the same reason the Bible studies came quite naturally to set the tone for the whole programme.*

*Two other features of the Saldus Conference should be recorded. The first is that for both confessions represented, the Lutheran and the Eastern Orthodox, it became a time of oecumenical discovery. For most delegates this was the first opportunity in their lives to come to know another confession in a vital way. The Lutherans discovered the Orthodox and the Orthodox the Lutherans. That this was more than a matter of intellectual curiosity came out on the Sunday and Monday when all of us went first to the Lutheran Communion Service and later to Orthodox Vespers and Mass, which were celebrated with the help of the Russian choir from Riga. "Never will I forget the impression made on me when my little heretic name was sung in the prayers of the oldest Church in the world", said a Swedish delegate. And the Orthodox added that they had not dared to believe that such real spiritual communion with Protestants would be possible.*

*Another revealing aspect of the Conference was its struggle with the problem of nationalism which is nowhere more acute than in these particular nations. There were passionate discussions on this point between the delegates of the younger nations (including Germany) which tend too easily to consider their national revivals as unmixed blessings of God and the representatives of the older nations which are inclined to consider all nationalism as per se un-Christian and hold to an (equally*



uncritical) internationalism. The conclusion drawn by a Norwegian leader that each group needed to let itself be corrected by the other and that both need to resist their particular temptations, was obviously justified.

"Saldus" will not fail to leave traces in North Eastern Europe. For the small but courageous Latvian Movement it has meant a new sense of being part of a great adventure of God. For all it has meant a new consciousness of a common task in North Eastern Europe and a new gratitude for the existence of the Federation.

### A Missionary Meeting of French Youth

After a short appearance at the Leader's Course of the World's Y.W.C.A., where I lectured on "Christianity and Nationalism" and where I found many women student leaders, I went on to Grenoble for the annual study conference of the "Commission Missionnaire des Jeunes". The impressive thing about these seventy French students and teachers was that they had not merely come together to talk vaguely about the need of missions or to listen to tales of missionary adventure but that they spent their time in a most systematic study of the real problems of the missionary field. There were courses on the African fields where French missions are at work and a series of lectures by Jean Gastambide about China and Japan (which he has visited with Francis Miller) and by myself on India and the Dutch East Indies. Thus we came as near a comprehensive picture of the present missionary situation as is possible in a few days.

Much interest was aroused by the plan to hold an international student conference on missions next summer probably in Strasbourg. It would seem that the time is ripe for a different, more realistic presentation of missions to the present student generation. And France, which does probably more for Protestant missions than any other country with a similar number of Protestants, will provide the background of intelligent interest among youth which we need.

### Comparing Notes With the Older Generation

At Herlenstein near Lucerne I attended finally the meeting of the Continuation Committee of "Faith and Order", alias the Lausanne Movement. Dr. Tallow had again made sure of a delegation of theological students from various Student Christian Movements and I had come with the hope of conferring with them on the share of our movements in the preparations for the next World Conference at Lausanne in 1937.

The composition of the Committee was strong. There were many outstanding Church leaders and professors of theology and the Arch-

bishop of York presided with his usual authority. Is it merely due to the impatience of youth that our younger group felt nevertheless somewhat disappointed? When we were called upon to give our impressions we had to say that we felt that the present method of simply discussing theology by itself might lead to the stabilisation rather than the transcending of differences. And we made a plea for more constructive action along the following lines: the coordination of the many oecumenical activities which are actually going on in our own Federation and other movements, the relating of all discussions to the main issue of Church Unity, a decentralisation policy which would encourage the development of regional groups; and the drawing in of the generation of younger pastors.

We realised of course that "Lausanne" has taken upon itself the most difficult part of the oecumenical task. But it is precisely because of this that we would like it to become the most thorough and hard-working of the oecumenical movements. As it is, there seems to be too great a disproportion between the means used and the task to be performed. And without presumption we may say that thanks to its experience in the last fifteen years our movement has gained some insight into this question of means which ought to be made use of in the wider area of Church life.

#### Reflections of a Tired Conference Delegate.

When in a few days the League of Nations Assembly will be closed and the stream of visitors will have ceased, the summer will definitely be over and the excitement of days full of new faces and new ideas will give way to the more even course of ordinary life. Or should we put it that at last talk will be over and work will begin? However tempted the tired conference delegate may be to take that line, he cannot if he looks back on the happenings of the summer. Of course, there has been much talk, mere talk, in it all. But there was also much talk which was work, because it changed something. Speaking for the two victims of conferences which I know best, namely the Federation and myself, I can say that both have been changed in the process because it was a process of life. At Châtaigneraie and Saldus the Federation was not merely expressing itself, it was also being re-made. And as long as that is true or rather as long as we may believe that this remaking is a way in which God works at the Federation and ourselves, we may joyfully prepare for the next summer of conferences and meetings.

V. 't H.

## THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

### Karl Barth before the World

*We have been sorely tempted to give a different title to this stenographic report of Karl Barth's answers to the many questions and objections which followed his lecture<sup>1</sup> on: "The Christian as Witness" at the Châtaigneraie Federation Conference. The journalist in us was much attracted by the classical: "Karl Barth contra mundum." But sometimes even the journalist must give way to truth. And in spite of the impression created by the deluge of objections and of Karl Barth's own feeling at certain moments of the discussion it was certainly not true that the Federation Conference was solidly opposed to Barth's message. For the delegates who felt in agreement with Barth let Barth speak for them and did not participate in the discussion. And for many others Barth's approach was too unexpected and too new to take any well defined attitude to it. We regret that it has been impossible — for linguistic reasons — to report the questions and comments as fully as the answers of Barth. The reader who can read between the lines will, however, not find it difficult to discover what these were.*

. . .

The first question is, how the flight of man to the witness of God, of which Karl Barth has spoken in his sixth thesis, should be described psychologically?

*Barth:* In order to answer this question I must first point out that in my address of this morning I have not tried to give a bit of autobiography but a description of what the Bible means by witness. The witness is a human being and insofar it must be possible to describe his attitudes in terms of psychological categories. It is, however, impossible to give a general description of what happens in the process which I have called the "flight". It was asked whether I had in mind something like the practice of the Oxford Groups which encourage their members to keep careful notes regarding the inner life. I cannot say that this is necessarily out of the question, but

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<sup>1</sup> See page 326.

when someone from the Oxford Groups would come and say : " A witness *must* keep such notes ", I would say : " No ! " For it is quite possible that a witness may live very carelessly in this respect and never think of taking notes. On the other hand if someone would say : " A witness is not allowed to take notes ", I would be tempted to say : " I will take notes ". My point is that the psychological realm in which the witnessing takes place is as broad in its possibilities as human life itself. The flight may take on very different aspects. It may be that the witness is a man who lives in fear and who makes the impression of trying to escape from life. But it is quite as possible that he is a strong and courageous personality who is, however, fleeing in the sense in which I have used the word. It is, therefore, impossible to define this particular event in terms of psychology.

. . .

The second speaker expresses gratitude for Barth's address but considers it too one-sided. He feels obliged to state that he has found in it a dichotomy between two conceptions of God, namely God the Creator and God the Reconciler. It would seem that the first is not a good God for He has created man as a bad creature who should escape from himself. Again Barth seems to look on man merely as an object and not sufficiently as a subject in the process between God and man. However, the Bible does not only call us servants but also friends of God.

*Barth*: The objections which we have just heard are in complete opposition to the things which I have tried to say this morning. It would have been better if the speaker would not have begun by an expression of agreement followed by a " but ". He ought to have simply told me that I was wrong, for in that case we would have understood each other better. Those who think that they can simply add a small " but " or an " it seems to me " to what I have said have not understood me at all.

Friends, I must tell you that in the many discussions, through which I have gone in these last twenty years, this has happened again and again to me that I was met with a kind word of agreement and that immediately afterwards the " but " appeared as a small back-door through which all that I had fought against came marching in again. If we want to look each other straight into the eyes, you must not confront me with a " yes — but ", but rather with a strong and definite " no ".



With regard to the question itself I am afraid I have been completely misunderstood. It is certainly not in my mind that there are two Gods. I have tried to make it very clear that there is only one God and Lord. For God the Reconciler is also God the Creator. The question is, however, whether belief in God the Creator means that after all man is not so badly off and that we can say : " God and man " ? You have spoken of Christ. Let me remind you of this fact : Christ considered that He could not help men otherwise than by dying for them. In the face of this fact, before the Cross of Christ and His Resurrection what can we say but that men as men without Christ are lost ? And lost does not mean a little bit lost, but altogether lost. " Thy brother was dead and is alive again ". What happens to us is a miracle of God. It happens certainly to men whom God has created, but it happens as a miracle of the mercy of the One God. And if this is so, how can we still speak of cooperation ? I do not deny that man is also subject, but according to the Bible this human subject can only be helped by the fact that another subject takes his place. I believe that we must begin to understand again what the vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ means. " I live but it is not me but Christ who lives in me ". In the face of such truth we cannot say : " But there is such a thing as cooperation ".

Of course, we are neither stones nor animals but human beings, perhaps even quite decent human beings, but it remains true that Christ can only help us by dying for us. I would plead with you not to form your estimate of man in a free and arbitrary fashion but according to what the Bible tells us. If you do that, we will understand each other better and you will no longer try to make the kind of correction which was indicated in your question. You will then understand not necessarily my theology, for that is unimportant—but the general attitude which lies back of my conviction. And you will accept it or reject it. We need clarity more than anything else today. The Church dies if we continue to produce mere private opinions. We must recover the courage to confess our faith clearly and equally the courage to contradict each other.

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A Chinese delegate asks a number of questions concerning the relation of the Kingdom of God to this world and regarding the attitude of the Church to social needs.

*Barth* : I am grateful for the remarks of our friend from China. His words showed real impatience and I would be glad if we would

all have a share of this impatience in us. His questions expressed clearly that he is moved by the misery of his fellow beings and, looking at the Church which is confronted with this need, he asks : Should it not intervene more definitely ? Should it not find and proclaim a clear answer to this need ? He has obviously had the impression that in my address I have tried to deny this and he is impatient with me for this reason. But that has not been my intention at all.

If his impression were right he would be quite justified in protesting, for if we see man suffer we have the right to look out for help. And again we have the right to appeal to the Gospel and to the Church for this help. What is the use of the Church, of reconciliation and deliverance when it does not bring reconciliation and deliverance to these unhappy human beings ? What is the point of the Lord's Prayer : " Thy Kingdom come ", if not that we pray that the Kingdom may come to us on this dark earth and that a new heaven and a new earth may come into existence ? What is the hope of faith if it is not the real hope of a real liberation ? Dear friend, if that is what you mean, this passion of hope and prayer : " Come, Lord Jesus ", the prayer which we can all pray together in our common need, then we are at one. Those who take their stand there and in the face of all the injustice around them will lift their hands to God, they will be passionate men and will also *do* something in their lives.

It happens that I was formerly an advocate of religious socialism. I have got away from that, because I discovered that among the religious socialists the misery of men and the help which is offered to them were not taken sufficiently seriously and not understood in all their depth, as they are understood in the Bible. I do not say " no " to the concerns which you have presented. On the contrary, I would make them my own. But I would ask you to take your own questions even more seriously. When we read in the Bible we are confronted with a piece of human history. In it we read much about injustice and bloodshed, but curiously enough there is not much of a fuss made about these things. It is said very simply of man that he is lost and dead in his sins. Everything is said in that one statement. For thus human misery is taken seriously as the misery of man who has separated himself from God, who struggles against God and is in all his actions an enemy of God. And on the other hand the help is understood as radical help. For God intervenes Himself for *this* same man.

I would therefore not ask you to forget your questions but to make them more radical. If you would do that, all your questions would be put in brackets. Why is there still suppression ? If we hear what the Bible has to say about man, we are less astonished about

all that happens in the world. How can we be astonished if we know Jesus Christ who has died for us and if we then look at ourselves ? What helps man is not his own will. The help comes from the Lord who has created heaven and earth.

Again you ask, is there truly a Church of God ? The answer is, I *believe* in the Holy Catholic Church. But the question can also be reversed and put to us : Are *you* in the Church of God ? Wherever we take human misery and divine help really seriously there it is given to us to see something of this Church. But it is a gift of God which has to be given to us again and again. And when you ask finally whether the Kingdom of God will come on earth by evangelisation or by social work, I would answer : The Kingdom comes by the act of God Himself Who makes all things new. It does not matter so much whether we proclaim the Gospel or whether we do social work, but it does matter that we understand and carry in our hearts the prayer : " Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done ". In other words, I do not answer your questions negatively but I ask you to consider whether you ought not to see the situation of humanity in much greater dimensions.

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An Indian delegate states that the answer of man to the invitation of God should be more definitely emphasised. In India it is not possible to take one's starting-point from the Bible alone. It is necessary to take the whole background of India into consideration in order to present the Gospel in such a way that it will be understood.

*Barth:* It is to me a curious and impressive fact that the trend of our present discussion is so very similar to the trend of discussions following my lectures elsewhere, namely that " the other side " is defended with warmth and passion. What is the reason for this passion ? Why do so many say : Not only God but also *man* ? Have you ever found in the Bible *that* kind of zeal ? Are you not struck by the fact that the Bible speaks always in the direction in which I spoke this morning ? Of course, the Bible has a good deal to say about man, but always as in relation of subordination to God. You find me too severe and too one-sided. Perhaps I am one-sided. But please do not shift the responsibility to me. Do you know of any prophet, any apostle, any reformer who has been interested in anything else than what I try to do in my own small way ?

In the Bible God and man are certainly two distinct entities. But man never appears in the rôle of an independent partner. When the Bible speaks of man it speaks of him as a child of God, as one who

belongs already to Christ, who is already saved. The Bible knows God as the God Who stretches out His hand toward man. The Christian witness standing before his fellow-man should therefore constantly say to himself: "For these also Christ died, these also belong to God". There is, of course, another possibility which appears in the Bible as the shade of this light: that man hardens his heart and rejects the good news. But this type of man appears only as an impossible being. The man whom the Bible considers as reality is the child of God. All that happens between God and man, happens within the circle which God has drawn around Himself and ourselves. Those who have recognised God will not feel any need for maintaining themselves over against God but rather believe that He and He alone can help them, for he has helped them and will help them.

You have spoken of India and its particular difficulties. I have never been in India and do not know how one should speak to Indians. But I know a little about speaking to men elsewhere who are sinners and who must be saved by a miracle. Of course, we must speak of this miracle in the language of the persons concerned, whatever that may be. But we can only speak on the basis of *grace*. You cannot begin by addressing men as pagans, but must approach all, Indians and others, as men for whom Christ has already done everything. I can only call in the non-Christian if I believe that he is already in the fold, that he is already inside. And that not because I make him an insider but because Jesus Christ has already made him His own. That is the reason why I am not interested in worrying about man as such. I must concern myself with him as one who is in Christ. Thus I do not need a point of contact because the point of contact has already been established. To remind men of *this* contact is the task of the Christian witness.

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A Russian delegate relates the story of martyrdom of an Archbishop during the Russian Revolution. He claims that such martyrdom is by itself a proclamation of the Gospel and that therefore the conception of witnessing should be taken in a much broader sense and not merely be restricted to the realm of witnessing by words. By our acts and especially by our suffering we may witness to Christ.

*Barth:* In the New Testament the Church is not purified by the blood of martyrs. Whether we like it or not the word "witness" is not used for the acts and suffering of the martyrs. The emphasis on and glorification of the martyr is first found at a later stage,



namely in the Epistles of Ignatius. In the New Testament we have the story of only one martyr, namely Stephen. And in his case it is not his suffering but his speaking which makes him a witness. The Church is purified by the blood of Jesus Christ alone.

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The next series of questions and comments deal with the same main points. It is objected that the conception of witness, as held by Barth is too narrow and it is asked whether this conception should not be broadened so as to include the witnessing through love and action.

*Barth:* Friends, when I reflect on the situation in which I stand now before you, I think of myself as a person who tries in vain to swim against a strong current. Or, if you prefer a biblical image, I might say that I feel somewhat like the prophet Jonah in Ninive. Again I might compare you to a field of corn over which a breeze passes. The ears are bent for a few moments and then they stand again exactly as they stood before. Under this beautiful tree I will, however, not follow the example of the prophet but rather try to answer as best I can without becoming impatient if the same questions and objections come again and again.

I prefer not to enter into a detailed discussion of the various objections that have been made, for at bottom they all mean one and the same thing. It is better to go a bit further afield in order to explain myself more clearly. In the first place I beg of you not to believe that I have spoken here as the representative of a purely theoretical idea which has somehow entered my head. When such words as abstract and theoretical are being used, I must point out that I have also a little bit of "experience". I am something of a modern man myself and know about the problems of our time. It is, therefore, perhaps not so very necessary to teach me so tempestuously that "life" is the really important thing. I have also to live my practical life and that in a most turbulent situation. But it is precisely because of this life and because of the struggle with the modern world that I have been compelled to enter upon the road on which I am now travelling.

Let me describe my starting-point! I have been a pastor during ten years and I had the task to proclaim the Gospel. But soon I met the problem which is so very familiar to you all, namely the problem of secularism. Secularism means that this modern world in which the Church has to live, follows quite evidently rules of life

which are absolutely different from those which through the Bible we know as the Christian rules. In this secularised Christian world I saw a Church, a Christendom which, with all its zeal, all its spirituality and all its striving for action and love, was only too closely related to this world. The reason for this unhappy situation was that this modern Church, in Switzerland, in Germany and probably also in other countries, had not set up a sanctuary. It knew no longer the meaning of the sacrament and did not realise that God and the world stand in opposition to each other and that God alone can help this world. The Church had taught through its very best representatives that the world and humanity must be helped by love, by the things which the Christians have, by what they are, what they have thought out, what they have to offer the world of their own rich spiritual treasures. The Churches have tried to do this through evangelisation and philanthropy, through social work and later through a curious mixture of Christianity and nationalism. The result was a Church which was no longer the Church of God and did not even want to be the Church of God but rather the Church of pious, moral and good humanity, in short the Church of man. Now my contention is that this modern Church is too closely related with the modern godless world. It represents merely the other side of the world. When the world tried to liberate itself from God, it was imitated by this modern Church and by modern Christendom.

There came a time in my life when I became terrified of this situation. At first I attempted to go the road which most of you commend in this discussion and I tried almost everything that can be tried in this connection. But then I was startled by the discovery that in the Bible there is to be found something utterly different, something which does not only contradict the godlessness of the world but also the godlessness of the Church and of Christendom. It is not necessary to tell you what it was that I found in the Bible for that was the contents of my lecture.

In listening to you I am reminded of a particular period of Church history, namely the period of about 200 years ago. At that time the Church thought it was making a great discovery, a discovery along the line of what most of you have advocated: to teaching we must add life, to the word we must add love and action. This was the period at the beginning of the 18th century when pietism revolted against the orthodoxy of the two preceding centuries. There was much truth in the criticism which the 18th century levelled against these earlier periods. For the Church had heard the message of God and Christ through the Reformation, but it appeared some 150

years later that something was lacking, namely Christian life. There was much preaching and good preaching but love was not active. At this moment, as people lived under the impression of the dark age of the Thirty-Years War and of the whole 17th century, the great mistake was made that instead of saying : " Let us try to understand *better*, to listen *better*, to let God really be God and Christ be Christ ", it was said : " We will improve this situation *ourselves*. We want to cultivate Christian life ". People turned away from God and began very seriously and very piously to cultivate that which we see today in full maturity : pious man. But after the adoration of pious man came gradually the adoration of moral man. And finally it was felt that, if man is so centrally important, it is less important to speak of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, and human reason began to occupy the place of honour.'

This brings us to the present. Dear friends from England and America, I come from Germany and we are there today at the *end* of the same road which you are just proposing to enter upon. If you begin by taking pious man so seriously as you would like to do in your fear of onesidedness, then one comes in the end to the place where the official German Church stands today. For what we have just experienced in Germany, this amazing defection of the Church to nationalism, which horrifies certainly all of you and which makes you say : " Thank God that I am not a German ", that is the end of the road which you would go. It begins with Christian " life " and it ends with paganism. For if you have once opened the door for the : " Not only God but also *myself* " and if your real interest is specially in the second (and it would seem that your interest is actually in the second), then you cannot stop the inevitable development. You may be sure that among the " German Christians " there are many serious and very fine persons, but that has not saved them from falling into this error. That is why I would like to warn you all. If you begin to say : God *and...*, then you open the door to the demons. The objection which I would raise against all that has been said so far is : *Tu non considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum !* You have not yet realised of which weight sin is. For sin means that man takes himself seriously.

At present these considerations may seem far-fetched to you. For the time being you are yet in a position in your Churches in which you can quietly discuss. The enemy has not yet appeared in your midst, at least not in the same way as in Germany. You do not yet deal with men in open revolt who take their rights in their own hands without counting the cost. What will you do if similar events appear in your country ? Will you fight them with *these*

weapons ? I must predict that you will not be able to meet the enemy on this ground. Our experience in Germany is that the only possibility of confronting this enemy is to present quite simply the message of God as the *only* helper, the very "either-or" which you would reject. As long as you reject it you are still like a soldier who is in training in the barracks before the real sharp shooting has begun. If the day comes when you will be called to the front, you may think again of this discussion and you will understand many things better than you can understand them today. Onesidedness is the only possibility !

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A Student from Czechoslovakia asks a question about the basis of Christian ethics. Is it not so that Christian ethics never gives general indications and that it consists of concrete decisions each of which has to be made in the face of the judgment and grace of God.

*Barth:* Before answering this last question I would like to touch again on a point which seems not to have become sufficiently clear, namely the relation between the modern Church and secularism. I may start again from the question of martyrdom. Historically the development was as follows : In the New Testament "witness" does not mean at all what has later been called "martyrdom". The 11th chapter of Hebrews has been quoted, but I must remind you that the first verse of that chapter says, that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". If the witnessing of the martyr is understood in this sense we are in tune with the Bible. But a very different conception of the martyr came up in the second century. It was forgotten that it is not in the suffering that his witness consist but in the faith in invisible things. It is a tragic misunderstanding of the martyr and of the great gift which the Church has received through martyrdom, to take his suffering for his real witness. As history went on and martyrdom began to belong to the past it was thought that the *life* of the Church was its real witness. Have we ever considered what is implied in saying that the life of the Church should be the real witness for God ? Are we sufficiently optimistic to believe that that is possible ? Do we not see that even our best Christian life speaks more against than for Christ ? If the Church does not witness by setting up a true sanctuary, I am afraid that there will not be any witness in the world at all. The world is not waiting for the beautiful things which we may be able to show ; it is waiting for Jesus Christ.



It is interesting that in one of the last questions there was a reference made to revelation in nature. If we start with that kind of thing where will we draw the limit? If so, why not revelation in race and blood and soil which leads us straight into paganism? I am also a lover of nature and consider it a gift of God, but the Church does not exist to proclaim nature but to proclaim Jesus Christ. Such is for me the connection between secularism and the modern Church: It all begins with God and finishes without Him. And after the first step has been taken this is inevitable.

I have still to answer the last question concerning Christian ethics. Of course, man has to make constant decisions, great or small, for in all that we do we are responsible to God and His Word. With its whole life the Church as well as every individual must give an account of itself or himself before this judge. That is Christian life. But we must add that we do not live as atoms, everyone by himself and that the decisions which we have to take are therefore not merely decisions on the basis of the Holy Scripture and of our reason. We live in the Church in a particular Christian tradition and have a particular form of Christian instruction. We have the teaching of the Church in catechism and dogma and we have to take these as well as all other insights of the Church seriously. In short, we have fathers in the faith and the Fourth Commandment holds true for our relation with them. But the "fathers" can never take our own responsibility away from us and so we remain constantly faced with the necessity of decision in all realms of life including political life. In making decisions the Church will have to take care that it does not let itself be carried away by any particular modern temper. For that is its greatest danger. If it falls into this error it will be quite clear that its decision is not taken before the Word of God. It will be necessary for the Church in times when a particular temper becomes dominant all over the world to say: "hands off". In such cases it should rather say too little than too much. The Church can take decisions by a simple exposition of the Bible. For instance, if the Church today in Germany would do nothing but explain the Sermon on the Mount in the sense of the New Testament, it would not directly speak to the issue of national-socialism but it would very definitely take a decision. The task of the Church is to say on the basis of the Bible the one thing which helps man to take his own decisions. Those who are willing to listen to the New Testament today will not be undecided. They will be glad that there is this tribunal beyond their own decisions to which they may return when it becomes clear that their decision was wrong. For we all make many mistakes and precisely because this is so it is necessary that right in the midst of

the world there should again be set a sanctuary and that it should not be a mixture of Church and world but truly that Church which reminds of the eternal Kingdom.

### The Call to Revolution in India

*Mr. Chetsingh's article, written for the Third Quarter Number on "The Call to Revolution" arrived just after that number had gone to press. It is included in the present issue in order to complete our survey on the revolutionary aspirations of students. An interesting comparison may be made between this article and the one by the editor on "The Idol of Young India" (Chronicle, Third Quarter). There is a striking similarity both in analysis and conclusion between them.*

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*"The longer the dues of nations are kept in arrears, the heavier becomes the payment". (Surrendranath Banerji).*

"But who will make a revolution in India"? This was a remark which a teacher of economics, a fellow Indian, made in the course of a half-serious conversation centering on the iniquitous economic differences in Indian life. It almost reeks of sordid realism. And yet it deserves the attention of any one who seeks seriously to understand the land of Hindustan. A factor of prime importance in the Indian situation is the Indian climate. Barring a few areas which experience bracing and even biting winters the bulk of the Indian population lives in an atmosphere in which the shade of the trees calls you to relax and repose, for life is too short and fleeting and too full of mystery to let opportunities for physical ease slip by. So the millions work because they have to work in order to produce the bare means of subsistence. They grow up to learn to be content with little. The warm climate accentuates the subtle but unmistakable characteristics engendered by the memories of defeat at the hands of more vigorous and ambitious peoples down the centuries — defeat often sustained because of an inward belief that it was hardly worth while to resist. Here then are factors in the make up of the *average Indian* which can be neglected by the serious student of Indian affairs only at grave cost. Shrewd observers — Indians as many others — are not unmindful of their import. A Cambridge man who looked forward to a career in the colonial service in Nigeria was at the London Day Training College for teachers while I was there. He

would boastfully remind me of this frequently — as if the climate of India was one of the permanent “safeguards” established in India by his fellow henchmen of British Imperial Policy! Well, link up with this enervating climate the monotonous regularity with which the Monsoon plays havoc with man and beast in India. In the zones of certain rain-fall, as in the vast tracts of uncertain rain-fall, the capriciousness of nature, here in drought and scarcity there in the pestilential flood and overflow, is made patent to a population only too prone to philosophise. The comparatively “wealthy and successful foreigner” in India who glibly comments on the lack of perseverance so often shown by hundreds of unsophisticated, inexperienced enthusiasts in scores of reform efforts up and down the country, has yet a long way to travel before he can hope to begin to understand the nature of our problems and peculiar difficulties.

#### *The More Immediate Background.*

It is too early to estimate the full significance of the last 20 years in the re-shaping of Indian life in almost all spheres of thought and activity. Considerations of space restrict us to a brief statement of two aspects, namely, the economic and the political.

Before the great war the few wary and almost half-hearted ventures of Indian capital in the field of modern industrialism received little, if any encouragement at the hands of those with whom rested the direction and control of policies in India. The Government were more concerned with the development of India as a market than with helping India along the road of economic evolution. (On the whole question read Vera Anstey's brilliant and eminently sane *The Economic Development of India*, London, 21s. net.)

With the war, however, things were bound to change. Indian capital boldly entered the field of industry and commerce. The definite emergence of a growing class of modern industrialists in India may be traced back to the war years. Thousands of Indians who went out of India to help the cause of Britain and her allies, *and to make a living*, came in contact with new modes of life and thought in the free atmosphere of Europe and many other parts of the world, where they were as equals among equals. They saw a different economy of life, and what is more, they saw it with new eyes. They earned money to save it and finally returned to their villages with a vivid impression of what they had seen, to help make effective the inroads of new features of western and other modern economy in the life of the village evidenced in new houses, new styles of dress, articles of consumption and in scores of other little

things. This was the beginning of the break up of the old self-sufficing rural unit. Soon men learned to ride to the neighbouring town in motor buses and the women to take their grain to the nearby flour mill, instead of using the ancestral hand mill. The real India, the India of the villages, was being subjected to change.

The world over men wrote and thought and talked about self-determination and a fair deal for weaker nations as a result of the issue to which President Wilson's declarations had brought the war. The Home-Rule Movement, as it was then called, gathered momentum in India. The British Parliament was carried, as it were, on the crest of the wave of national gratitude and of that generous liberalism of which that great Englishman, Edwin Montague, was a symbol and was led into accepting the goal of the "progressive realisation of self-government" for India. All seemed well when the bureaucracy in India chose to decide that it must arm itself with extraordinary emergency powers, — which its arch-protagonists embodied in the Rowlatt Act in spite of unanimous opposition from non-official Indians — if they were to remain and uphold the prestige of the ruling race in India. There were vehement protests from all corners of the land and Gandhi was persuaded that it was his duty to put himself at the back of the agitation for the repeal of the stupid law which the government *would* keep on the statute book, though not once in three years, while it lasted, was there occasion to use it! The unfortunate, hasty and imperious actions in the Punjab, of which the shooting at Jallianwalabagh in Amritsar was the chief, followed, bringing in their train the first non-cooperation movement under Gandhi, perhaps the first really national movement in modern India. The people not only of the towns but also in considerable rural areas learnt their first lessons in national consciousness and national self-respect. Literally thousands of men and women went to jail or suffered otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

The Indian National Congress — founded in 1885 — now the largest organisation of the people, became the chief channel for flow of this new national fervour. The vast majority of men that mattered kept aloof from the new legislatures and other government bodies that came into being in accordance with the new Government of India Act which was rushed through Parliament in December 1919 in the hope of rewinning alienated Indian politicians and leaders. To make matters worse there was no more a Montague at the India Office, which was soon to be presided over by a blustering bloated

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<sup>1</sup> For an account of this fascinating chapter in Indian political evolution see *The Indian Outlook* by Holland. Edinburgh House Press 2/6 net.



arch-Tory, Birkenhead. The rift was complete. Government used the nailed fist but repression can nowhere win affectionate respect and trust or loyalty and the Government of India were afforded a chance — in vain — to learn that universal political principles are true of India too. They threw it away and foisted the Simon Commission on India. This provided the country with a second "national" opportunity to learn the meaning of national self-respect. Even the liberals kept away from the commission. It is literally true to say that only a few nationalists (and those in dotage), a few immature politicians, and a number of people with whom the chief concern is always the first person singular, allowed themselves to be associated with the Commission in any form. The Civil Disobedience Movement of Gandhi which took advantage of this stage of affairs actually unnerved the British Government, a fact few Englishmen would care to admit now that, once again, they have the upper hand. Lord Irwin tried to repair the breach between Government and the people and achieved a considerable measure of success. Meanwhile, however, political events were happening in England which under the present system must determine the course of affairs in India, 7,200 miles away. Wedgwood Benn was driven from office (and from his seat in Parliament) and in came a seasoned Tory as Secretary of State while experienced tingsods had already appeared in Simla as Viceroy and Vicerine in the persons of Lord and Lady Willingdon. The delaying tactics of the Round Table Conference were further prolonged by the Conservative government in Britain and clever manoeuvring widened all the breaches and rifts — grave enough at any time — in the nationalist front.

The two major communities, the Hindus and the Muslims failed to arrive at an agreed settlement on the anti-national system of communal representation, a system, be it remembered, planted by the twin skill of Lords Minto and Morley and nurtured and strengthened under the Montague-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, at the Round Table Conference. Indeed, composed as the conference was of seasoned and new-found advocates of sectional interests, it would have been a miracle had it found it possible to agree to any principles calculated to bring about solidarity and complete unification among the various sections of the Indian people. These facts should be remembered when mention is made of the unpleasant task of what is known as the Premier's Award placed on the shoulders of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. True that Gandhi was also a member of the second session of the Conference; but a conference thus made up was more likely to bring out the somewhat partial hold of the Mahatma over the immense population of India. I do not for a moment suggest that

either Mr. Wedgwood Benn or Lord Irwin had deliberately packed the Conference, but I do insist that they were only two *individuals* who, as things are, were driven by that great bureaucratic machine which holds the destinies of India. This discussion could be an endless one : we must now turn to the present.

### *Conditions Today.*

To get a glimpse of the present we must cast a hurried look at the economic, social and socio-religious and political conditions obtaining at the present time. In attempting to do so within the compass of a brief section of an article one is compelled to present one's conclusions without satisfying oneself that the reader is getting enough data in the way of actual incidents and facts. This is deplorable but, under the circumstances inevitable. Should any reader, however, care to write to me and demand further information I would endeavour to explain my position.

The world has been for the last five years in the grip of some partially diagnosed malady known as " the Depression " All sorts and conditions of man in all parts of the world have been affected by it. India is no exception.

Primarily an agricultural country it has suffered much, though perhaps the prices of its agricultural produce declined more gradually than in some other parts of the world. " Cultivators who depended for their income on the production of cotton, jute and wheat were probably the most severely hit and undoubtedly a good deal of the distress which resulted from the general depression was due to the impossibility of maintaining the higher standard of living which had been attained during the last 20 years "<sup>1</sup>. The fall in the price of raw materials and agricultural produce was on the whole far more pronounced than in manufactured articles. In other words the prices of India's exports fell far more than those of her imports, and her exports have always been in excess of her imports.

Of distress among the educated classes it is not necessary to say much. British die-hards, Anglo-Indian publicists and " authorities " on Indian conditions of the tourist-variety are constantly telling the world that all the political trouble in India is the work of unemployed university men. Lately conditions have much worsened. Cases of suicide among students and workless people have become very common. In a land where there is no effort to get statistics

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<sup>1</sup> India in 1930/1931 : Government of India Report to Parliament, H.M.S. Office, Kingsway, London.

about unemployment — not to speak of the absence of relief measures — it is not surprising that during the last three or four years of distress there have been cases where parents and guardians have destroyed their economic dependents before putting an end to their own earthly existence in a world in which they could see no way of meeting their elemental needs.

People in this country, and others interested in India, often put the whole blame for this state of affairs on the educational system of the country. *The real trouble lies in the economic realm.* Not until there is a real *Revolution* in the economic sphere will there be any real peace and prosperity in India. And let me hasten to add, this involves a change in values.

Of the impact of the West on the ancient social system of India much has been written and said in recent years generally, and in the missionary world especially, since the Jerusalem Conference of 1928. The results of this impact have been described by some apt person as the “action of the acids of modernity on a decaying substance”. Like most general statements this one embodies only a part of the truth. In fact human society is constantly renewing itself and this renewal almost always involves a certain amount of pulling down. This is what has been going on in India for some years now. We have now reached a critical stage in this process. In many ways it presents a peculiar phenomenon and therefore deserves some notice.

For some time during the last fifty years or so the impact of the West engendered among my countrymen what in matter-of-fact language I might call the virtues of the ape. Then a reaction set in and most western things were wrong! Ignorant prejudice ran riot and “the glorious past” — somewhat real, somewhat fictitious — was extolled, in season and out of season. Today we are in a state of transition. The old system has been shaken — at some points to the very foundations, perhaps. For one, the old hold and dominance of religion in the life of India has been very largely lost. Of no other section of the people is this so true as it is of the growing student community throughout the land. The hold of superstition is still there, not so much in evidence perhaps as it used to be but still real in “inward places”. With the increase in population and the slow but sure penetration of modern methods of production and transport the struggle for existence has become much keener and infinitely more exacting. So while the young undergraduate, the research scholar, and even the youth who has launched out into the world as a professional man talk contemptuously of the “materialism of the West”, the fact remains that spiritual forces have long ceased to be the determining factors in their own lives. The incharitable

psychologist would even suggest that it is merely their compensation mechanism that is at work.

The significant fact to remember, as it appears to me, is that our scales of values *as a people* have yet to regain their balance. This does not mean that every complacent little foreigner should endeavour to explain away any unusual phenomenon he comes across in Indian life as something related to problems of abnormal psychology ! I say this here because I have met scores of them who try to do so.

The younger generation, and particularly the more thoughtful among university students, feel quite exasperated at this state of affairs. They would like to see clearly and immediately at least the drift of things. And this is why so many of them read all they can get hold of in the way of uncommon and perhaps somewhat bizarre literature — precious little of which is available in India except in the larger towns ! The fact of our political subjection made patent to us in every day experiences in ever new ways rouses an admiration in the heart of the young Indian for communism, socialism, fascism and almost every other "ism" that he hears about. But it is the admiration of ignorance and not of understanding faith.

The above remarks lead on to the influence of Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru among the younger people of today and the outlook for their philosophies in the coming ten or fifteen years.

#### *The Future — Gandhi or Nehru ?*

It is customary in discussing Gandhi and Nehru to concentrate on the difference in the two leaders. It is necessary, therefore, to remind ourselves that in fundamentals the two men have much in common. They represent the hungry and oppressed masses of India. They embody in their persons India's cry for justice. They are *not* politicians in the sense in which Mr. Churchill is a politician, or shall we say Mr. Lloyd George. They are in the political arena because of an inward *urge of the spirit* — of the religious rather than the pugnacious spirit. And I submit that this is true both of the Mahatma and of Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Gandhi's make up is that of the "old-fashioned" Indian who believes in the intervention of divine forces in human affairs from day to day and from hour to hour. His training has given him habits of almost unceasing work and austerity in living. In this respect he is like any other disciplined leader, shall we say of Nazi Germany or Marxist Russia. He continues to believe in, "Attempt great things for God ; expect great things from God ". This does not mean that I am willing to endow with any kind of special divine sanction any



measures of policy that he may adopt or advocate. But it is the spirit in which he works. He touches, therefore, one of the most responsive chords in the Indian heart. This is at the root of the hypnotic hold of the man over the masses. But they are not able fully to share his faith. And his promise that he would get Swaraj within one year *provided* the country fulfilled the conditions laid down by him — conditions involving disciplined non-violent self-purification and suffering — was never fully understood by the country. Men and women enlisted in his "army" without counting the cost in perseverance and discipline. I am inclined to agree with Mr. Mayhew, therefore, in his suggestion that India will most likely put Gandhi on the prophet's pedestal and then forget him — *so far as political work is concerned*. But he will not agree to be shelved for another five years or so and during that time, well, anything might happen!

Nehru is different in many ways. He is the symbol of rising self-reliant youth. He believes in the righteousness of his cause and he is willing to work and, I think, to wait. He has openly said that if it came down to a show of hands he would vote for communism in preference to fascism. But he is really a left-wing-socialist, judging from his career so far. He has renounced a great deal without talking about it and without any prospect of reward. He is essentially a man of action. He does not deliberate as the Mahatma does: I often feel that his utterances indicate the utter need of his personality for a "release". He feels the injustice and wrong which are so embedded in Indian life, more particularly in the political and economic spheres. Religion which has so often degenerated in India into little more than superstition has helped to bring about and perpetuate this state of affairs. Jawahar Lal Nehru will, therefore, in denouncing political and economic evils denounce religion also. To the man of true religious experience this will appear very much like throwing away the baby with the bath. But Nehru has no time for these nice distinctions. He must concentrate on the work in hand. That is why he goes on talking of the "robbery" of the big landlords of his province, though he knows that the time is not ripe for anything in the nature of effective resistance. The tenants must starve and suffer for many years to come yet. For the present system is too strong still for the legal sanctity it gives to inherited rights of social and economic tyranny to be touched.

Jawahar Lal is now in jail for having said in effect that in fighting terrorists in Bengal the Government is using terrorist methods. He has been regularly convicted in a court of law under existing law. I am concerned here with the future and, therefore, I must express my view that when he comes out of prison — probably after serving

his full sentence — he will have gained a new hold over the imagination of young Bengal. This hold will be a force to reckon with in any future agitation which perhaps five or six years from now Jawahar Lal may manage to launch on a nation-wide scale. I may be wrong; but that is what tendencies today seem to me to indicate.

The spirit of Jawahar Lal moves the young students of today. They desire something better than we have got today; they desire change; they desire revolution, as some people would say. But "who will make a revolution in India?" as our sceptic Indian professor asked. The future alone can show.

R. M. CHETSINGH.

## BOOK REVIEWS

## Various Attitudes to other Faiths

- CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND A NEW WORLD CULTURE. Archibald G. Baker. *Willet, Clark & Co., Chicago.* \$2.50.
- THE FINALITY OF CHRIST. Robert E. Speer. *Revell, New York.* \$3.00.
- DIE MISSION ALS THEOLOGISCHES PROBLEM. Karl Hartenstein. *Furche-Verlag. Berlin.* R.Mk. 4.50.
- DAS EVANGELIUM UND DIE RELIGIONEN. Heinrich Frick. *Rheinhardt, Basel. Schweiz. Franken* 2.20.
- MODERN TENDENCIES IN WORLD RELIGIONS. C.S. Braden. *Macmillan, New York.* \$2.50.
- THE LIVING RELIGIONS OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE. Nicol Macnicol. *S.C.M. Press, London.* 10s.6d.

Judging from the number of books which appear on the subject, the need for "rethinking" missions and the attitude of Christianity to other faiths in general is today being felt in the most diverse places and among the most diverse groups. The above mentioned books constitute only a relatively small part of the rich harvest of literature in this field. They are, however, sufficiently representative to give us a fairly comprehensive impression of the main issues which are thrown up in this significant discussion.

The most unusual approach to the subject is represented by Mr. Baker's, *Christian Missions and a New World Culture*, which has been hailed by the editor of *The Christian Century* as "the most important interpretation of Christian missions that has appeared since the modern missionary enterprise was launched a little more than a hundred years ago". Its significance lies in the fact that it says openly and clearly what many others have only dared to say vaguely and between the lines. Mr. Baker believes that "the missionary enterprise is rapidly becoming an applied science", for since "religion is a phase of cultural development" and missions are "one aspect of a more general process of culture interpretation" the whole future philosophy of missions will have to be based on a purely scientific sociological foundation. Claims of finality must go and instead of these must come the "universal stocktaking, by neutral bodies of

appraisers where possible, of the spiritual securities offered to the public".

By writing this book a great service has been rendered to the missionary cause. Now that we have such a very definite and well-presented statement of the purely pragmatic, cultural and humanist view of missions, it will become easier to draw the necessary distinctions between various types of missionary philosophies. And it will become more difficult to avoid the real issues as skilfully as the "Laymen" did in their report. A clear choice must now be made between missions as the sharing of cultural values and missions as the communication of God's word to all men. Personally I have no difficulty in choosing. Mr. Baker's picture of a body of neutral (!) professors gathered in conference to decide which values are most conducive to human welfare and will therefore be declared necessary elements for the world-religion seems to me closely akin to that rationalised millennium which Dostoevsky and Aldous Huxley have taught us to hate worse than our present chaos. Moreover, the elevation of the greatest weakness of missions (namely its alliance with our own cultures) into its very *raison d'être* seems to me such a tragic error that I would much prefer to have missions cease altogether than to have *these* missions. And I am afraid that the Eastern peoples would feel the same way.

Mr. Speer's, *Finality of Christ*, differs as fundamentally from Mr. Baker's book as two books on the same subject can possibly differ. It is clearly written as a defense of the traditional view of missions against such attacks as Mr. Baker's book represents. In fact, it is somewhat over-apologetic and tries to prove more than can be proved. Is it so certain that syncretistic religion can never be successful? If it were, we should have less reason to worry about syncretism. And can we really prove the divine origin of Christianity by its effects? If so, we might accept Mr. Baker's proposal concerning a mammoth commission of neutral scientists and settle the question of Christian superiority once for all. I must add, however, that Mr. Speer gives us pages packed full of deep insights concerning the missionary task and its underlying reality and that his main biblical emphasis is just the one which we need today as much as ever in the history of Christianity.

The temper of Director Hartenstein's volume of essays is somewhat similar to Dr. Speer's attitude. His great concern is also that the Christian message should remain unadulterated and he gives, therefore, richly documented essays on the shortcomings of syncretism. One wonders, however, if he has not forgotten that those who are most likely to read his book, need not only to be reminded of the danger of



watering down the Gospel, but at least as much of the danger of isolating and freezing it. The truly effective answer to syncretism is to preach the *pure* Gospel in an Eastern or African *form*. We hope that Dr. Hartenstein will sometime give us his best thought on that more positive aspect of the missionary problem on which so much depends for the future of the younger Churches.

Professor Frick's book, the smallest of the whole group, is at the same time the most important because it does what most needs doing, namely to clarify our confused thinking. The burden of his remarkably lucid presentation of the problem of Christianity and other faiths is that we must learn to think of it as a triangular problem. Not only must we distinguish between Christianity and other faiths, but just as much between the Gospel and Christianity. The confusion between these last two, which results in the conception of missions as propaganda of *our* faith, is no better than the confusion between Christianity and religion in general which results in a purely relativistic missionary philosophy. We must, therefore, study three relationships : 1) between the Gospel and Christianity; 2) between Christianity and other faiths; 3) between the Gospel and other faiths. The third of these has so far received very little attention. Professor Frick proceeds therefore to analyse this problem in particular and comes to the conclusion that the more we take other religions seriously, the better we understand the difference between the Gospel and our Christianity. In fact, the significance of the confrontation of Christianity with other faiths for ourselves is that we discover the deep solidarity of men, Christians and other pagans, in their common need of God's good news. The result of all true missionary activity is the self-criticism of Christianity. These few pages contain more than can be summarised in a review. Professor Frick's stimulating reflections should carry the discussion a stage further. We hope that this study will soon be translated.

Mr. Braden's, *Modern Tendencies in World Religions*, is factual rather than theoretical. It attempts to show how the different religions react to the impact of the modern world forces. The book contains much interesting material but it is very incomplete. The chapters on Japan and China are better than most others. In the Indian chapter the important work of the Ramakrishna mission is not described at all. And the chapter on "Modern Judaism" is amazingly one-sided in that it has nothing to say about the great European Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber. There is in these pages, however, so much valuable summary of significant trends in modern religion that one would hope to see a second and improved edition.

Dr. Macnicol's study of the religions of India is a masterpiece which can only be compared to Farquhar's well-known, *Modern Religious Movements in India*. To describe chaotic Hinduism so clearly, so shortly and still so comprehensively is a truly remarkable achievement. The book has all the advantages of a handbook, but it reads as easily as a good novel. And the temptation (which Farquhar did not always overcome) to give "multa" instead of "multum" has never become too strong for Dr. Macnicol's sense of proportion.

There is only one point which one feels inclined to criticise, namely that the picture of the Christian Church in India seems somewhat unrealistic. Does Dr. Macnicol really believe that the process of naturalisation of Christianity in India has been accomplished in large measure? Would it not be truer to say that this process has just begun?

What conclusions may be drawn from this survey of recent books on "Christianity and other faiths"? It would seem that we have still a long way to go before we will have carried the discussion to a plane on which the issues between westernism and syncretism, between fundamentalist dogmatism and modernist relativism are transcended. Our greatest need is for pioneers in a Christian missionary philosophy which will be equally concerned with the purity of the Christian message and with its naturalisation in the lands of the younger Churches and which will emphasise both the uniqueness of Christ and the solidarity of men.

V. 't H.

### Interpreting the Religious Thought of Post-War Germany

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMAN PROTESTANTISM. Dr. Otto Piper *S.C.M. Press London. 4/-.*

Post-war Germany has been so amazingly fertile and at the same time so disturbingly revolutionary in its religious thinking that it is almost impossible for a non-German to find his way through this labyrinth. The reading of the few books which have become widely known outside Germany does not help sufficiently, because one cannot evaluate their significance unless one knows their place in the context of German theology. Nothing can, therefore, be more welcome to those who would understand their German fellow-Christians than this little "Baedeker" which enables them to travel intelligently in the fascinating land of German religious thought.

Dr. Piper's book has indeed all the advantages and all the defects of a guide-book; the advantages, for every vital point is mentioned and one obtains at the same time a general and useful notion of the total picture; the disadvantages because the innumerable divisions and sub-divisions as well as the great many names make it difficult to read the book from cover to cover.

The first part, which gives the historical background, is much stronger than the second part which describes the present religious scene. The chapters dealing with the Reformation and its "corruption" and the further chapter on the influence of the war are particularly significant. One wonders if these two basic elements in German religion have ever before been analysed so clearly in such a short space. The later chapters are also interesting but the writer's sense of perspective, perhaps inevitably, seems to weaken when he comes to his own time. Why is Tillich treated at such length while such an exceedingly important issue as the Barth-Brunner controversy is dismissed in a few sentences?

The last chapter is frankly disappointing. Those who seek light on the *recent* developments in German Protestantism, as the title promises, will find it even more difficult to understand the present conflict in the German Church after reading these pages. Such a sentence about the present opposition as this: "This struggle does not involve a special theological programme nor start from a religious basis which is clearly distinct from the German Christians", is frankly misleading and leaves the erroneous impression that the present conflict is nothing but a conflict of personalities and interests. It is difficult to understand why the same writer who has such a fine insight into the Reformation should fail to explain the real issue which is at stake in German Protestantism today and which is essentially the issue of the Reformation: *sola fide*.

We would therefore recommend Dr. Piper's book not so much for its discussion of the recent developments but rather for its excellent analysis of the background of these recent developments. Those who have no access to the German sources but who would know what lies behind the great spiritual drama of contemporary Germany cannot afford to overlook it.

V. 't H.

## Notes on Contributors and Articles

G. VAN DER LEEUW is Professor of the History of Religion at the University of Groningen (Holland). He is the author of *Einführung in die Phänomenologie der Religion*, *La structure de la mentalité primitive*, and a number of Dutch books on the history and psychology of religion.

NICOL MACNICOL, formerly a missionary of the United Free Church of Scotland in India, is at present lecturing in America. He is the author of *Indian Theism*, *Pandita Ramabai*, *India in the Dark Wood* and *The Living Religions of the Indian People* (reviewed in this issue).

WILLIAM PATON is Secretary of the International Missionary Council, editor of the *International Review of Missions* and author of *Alexander Duff*, *A Faith for the World*, *The Faiths of Mankind* and *Jesus Christ and the World Religions*.

D.T. NILES is a theological student from Ceylon who has studied at Bangalore. He was a speaker at the Quadrennial Conference of the Indian S.C.M. at Allahabad. His article has first appeared in the *Student Outlook*.

KARL BARTH is Professor at the Faculty of Theology at Bonn. He is of Swiss nationality. His two best known books are *The Epistle to the Romans*, which has recently appeared in an English translation and the first volume of his *Dogmatics* which will soon appear in English and in French. His contribution to this issue represents the stenographic report of his lecture to the Federation Conference at La Châtaigneraie in August of this year. The discussion which followed is reported in "The Student World Chronicle".

L.P. LARSEN retired last year to his home-country, Denmark, after a life-time spent in missionary work in South India. He was responsible for the new translation of the Bible in Tamil.

P.C. HSU, formerly a Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation and the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.s, is now teaching at the School of Religion, Yenching University, China.

R. M. CHETSINGH, until recently a Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. at Lahore, is now Principal of a boys' school in North India. He



represented the Indian S.C.A. at the Federation's General Committee meeting at Nyborgstrand, Denmark.

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We call attention to the *Student World* Programme for 1935 which appears as an advertisement in this number. The publication of this programme should help our readers and friends to gain new subscribers for our magazine. We cannot repeat too often that the future existence of *The Student World* depends altogether on the active collaboration of its readers. Will *you* help to broaden our basis to such an extent that we need have no anxiety for the future of our common organ of discussion and inspiration ?

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#### Correction !

We regret to say that a mistake was made in the printing of Francis P. Miller's article on "The Position of Protestant Christianity in Japan and China" which appeared in "The Student World Chronicle" of the Third Quarter 1934 number. On page 270, line 11, a part of the sentence was omitted. The sentence should read : "*The Church in the East needs dogma — not the dead dogmatic forms that we have transported from the West, but a living, militant dogma born out of the actualities.*"

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# The 1935 Programme of THE STUDENT WORLD

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## *First Quarter :*

### **Our Attitude to "the Next War"**

Among the present student generation some think of "the next war" as a remote possibility, others as a probability, again others as an inevitable necessity. But all who are at all aware of the realities of the international situation wonder what their attitude should be if and when the tragic moment of decision comes upon them. Different answers will be given ; but rather than letting ourselves be confused by them we should consider them as materials which may help us to arrive at our own decision.

## *Second Quarter :*

### **Eastern Orthodox Nations**

This "Survey" number will describe the trends of thought and life among students in the lands where the historic Eastern Churches predominate. It will call attention to the struggle between Christianity and militant atheism which is being fought in this area, but also to the many signs of religious *renaissance* in Eastern Orthodoxy.

## *Third Quarter :*

### **The Significance of Jesus Christ**

Our unity in our Christian World Movement depends ultimately on the fact, that together we look up to Jesus Christ as the One, Who speaks *with authority* and not as the scribes, be they theologians, philosophers or national "leaders". But has not the time come when we must implement our unity by giving a more definite common answer to the eternal question : "Whom say ye that I am ?"

## *Fourth Quarter :*

### **Students, Workers, Villagers**

Students in many countries are making the discovery that they belong to a wider community. As their privileged economic position is threatened and as new ideologies of nation, state and society demand their allegiance, they become aware of the need for a better understanding of and closer relations with other classes of society. How students seek to express this urge toward a more inclusive solidarity will be described in the Fourth Quarter Number.



